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Politics of hope: Hans Magnus Enzensberger; Ariel Dorfman

Sarah Baxter on Carmen Callil, the publisher who denies everything

Raiding places

I saw mice with lumps on their backs as big as their heads

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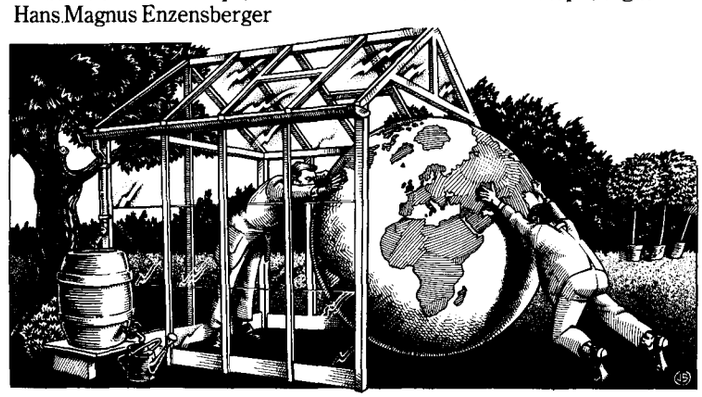

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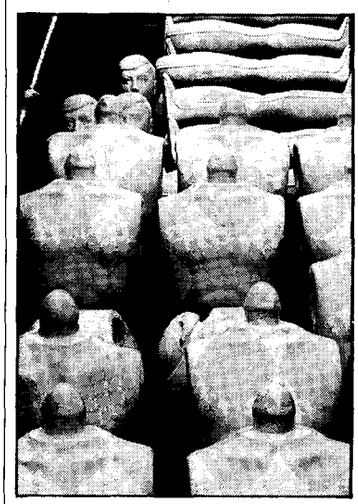

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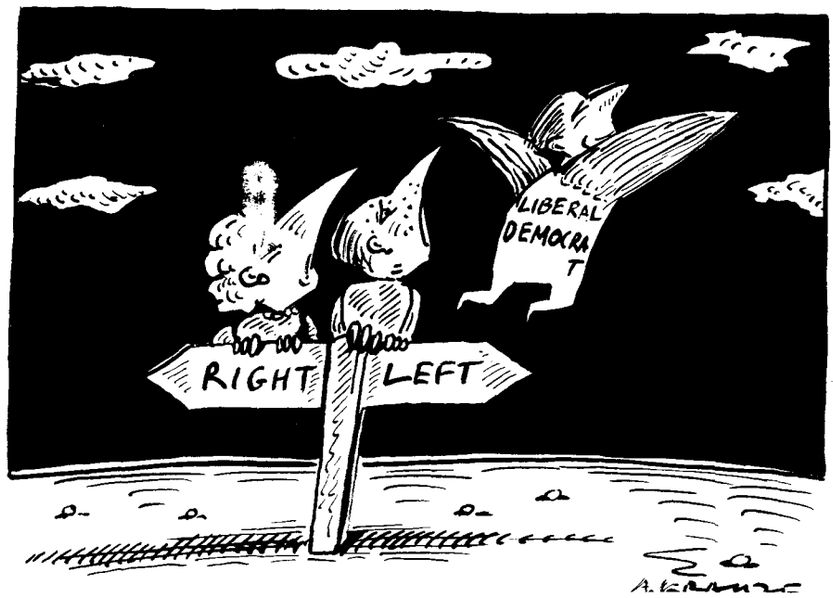
EDITORIAL

Trading places

Paddy Ashdown's Democrats are making the new model Labour Party look very stuffy



The Democrats leave Blackpool in slightly better shape than had seemed thinkable a year ago. They are solvent, they are more or less united, and their popular support, though confused, seems to have stabilised—even if rather in the way that a sinking ship stabilises when it hits the ocean floor. So far, so mediocre: there is nothing here to make Thatcher or Kinnock lose much sleep. But something more interesting also happened at Blackpool; the Democrats came out as a party to the left of Labour.

The idea that Labour has not only moved towards the centre, but now occupies it, is hardly controversial. But it might still seem strange to claim that the former Liberals are outflanking the former socialists. Just ask, though, which party proposes more change likely to upset the privileged and the powerful in Britain today?

On issues of political democracy, from electoral reform to Scottish home rule, the Democrats demand far more radical change than does Labour. For us, the first and most basic criterion for being on the left is to be a thoroughgoing democrat; and Ashdown's party passes the test better than Kinnock's. On Europe, the Democrats are wholehearted federalists while Labour's conversion remains halfhearted, patchy, reactive and opportunistic. If a second basic test of radicalism in British politics is to welcome a future in which sovereignty is shared between Europe, the nation state and region, not jealously hoarded in Downing Street, then here too the Democrats score over Labour.

Every party is grabbing for the green card today, of course, and there is perhaps nothing intrinsically radical about environmentalism. The crunch comes over whether you're prepared to put ecological health above profit and consumption—and again the Democrats are bolder than Labour. The Pollution Added Tax is a silly name for an admirable proposal. It's the kind of thing which Labour nowadays seems too timid to try; though, to their credit, the party's Euro-MPs are backing a very similar idea.

Labour, like every non-Tory party, has worried a lot over the years about the senile decay of our judicial system. Yet it has never brought itself to propose thoroughgoing reform. The Democrats have just done so. The French-style prosecutorial process they now advocate is probably *not* the best available alternative: but yet again they are grasping a nettle which Labour fears to touch.

On the question of equality, the Democrats are conservative. Historically, the Liberals were never really interested in redistributing wealth; they neither represented nor much liked poor people; and were often viscerally anti-trade union. But even here things have changed: here too a small party moving leftward is passing the big one going the other way. Whose tax policies are now the more redistributive? There's almost nothing to choose between them. The Democrats' plans for education and training are bolder than Labour's. For them the right to a decent education—at any stage in life—is both a prerequisite of full citizenship and the best single weapon against inequality. And although their attitudes to the unions are still depressingly hostile, their actual policies are virtually identical to Labour's.

So Paddy Ashdown now lambasts Labour not for extremism and irresponsibility, as Steel used to do, but for timidity and conservatism. Labour *needs* critics to the left, both within and outside its own ranks. Today it needs them more than ever, as counterweights to the dead hand of respectability and manufactured consensus. It was a delight too to find the *Independent* on Tuesday admonishing Ashdown as if he were a latter-day Tony Benn: deploring "silly" ideas like Church disestablishment, warning him against the dreadful lures of collectivism and social morality, lamenting that he lacks the *gravitas* of David Owen. Any politician who invites attacks like *that* must be doing something right.

But, as Baroness Seear demonstrated, the Democrats aren't necessarily as radical as their policies. In fact, there is a sense in which they simply haven't grasped quite how radical their democratic agenda is. They talk about the "system" as though they are plumbers, not radical democrats. What's missing is a proper measure of what they are up against when they call for a peaceful revolution: a sense of power. The Alliance was once able to distinguish itself by arguing that both major parties were extreme and authoritarian; but given Labour's strategic shift of direction under Neil Kinnock, they have to recognise that they are now challenging something more systematic than the leaderships of the two main parties. They need the courage to talk about the crisis of legitimacy, and hence of political, economic and social wellbeing, in the United Kingdom.

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Explosive material

The extraordinary efforts of the Israeli government to suppress US and Canadian publication of a book about its secret service, Mossad, is pure folly. The book has become a *cause célèbre*, guaranteed wide publicity.

It doesn't take prolonged study of the book, *By Way of Deception*, by former Mossad officer Victor Ostrovsky, to see why the Israeli government panicked. The real dynamite comes in the last chapter, titled "Beirut". Ostrovsky tersely states that Mossad withheld from the CIA information in its possession on the whereabouts of US hostages in Beirut, and the identity of their captors; and that Mossad knew from its agents in Beirut that Shiite Muslims were, in 1983, preparing a truck for a suicide bombing but deliberately kept from the US details of the truck's precise appearance that would have enabled sentries to spot it, and thus save the lives of 241 US Marines.

These claims are politically explosive. US troops are, just as the Marines were in 1983, deployed in the Middle East. Suppose Mossad knew of an impending terrorist attack; would it sit on its information again?

Even before the Israeli government's attempts to stop the book, its US publisher was exercising caution. Literary editors got a letter from the publicity director, saying that galley proofs already sent out "contained a small quantity of information that will not be included in the final version". What was excised were assertions by Ostrovsky that there had been a high-level Israeli go-ahead for the 1982 massacres by Christian Lebanese forces at the Sabra and Shatilla Palestinian refugee camps.

Ostrovsky says he is going public about Mossad because the agency has set Israel "on a collision course with all-out war". Many suspect that the Israeli government would like all-out war as soon as possible between the US and Iraq, and could even engineer a provocation to start one. The Mossad described by Ostrovsky is capable of such an act. Perhaps that is why such unwonted efforts have been made to keep Americans and Canadians from reading the book.

The devil you know

Does your child make farting noises, laugh when other people fart, have nightmares, play aggressively or sing rude versions of nursery rhymes? These are some of the symptoms displayed by children subjected to satanic abuse, according to Pamela Klein, American expert on the phenomenon. If applied to the nation's children as a definitive test of satanism, our schools would be emptied, and they'd have to hold case conferences at Wembley Stadium.

It's a pity these criteria have not been treated with the same rigorous scepticism applied to the anal reflex test in the Cleveland inquiry. This week yet more cases of satanic abuse have been dropped by the police because of lack of corroborative evidence. Social workers removed children from their families on the basis of accounts of ritualised abuse given by the children themselves. This is scant evidence indeed, and the policy of "always believe the child" may prove fatally flawed, not least because all children tell lies some of the time. Some lie in order to entertain, shock or amuse. Young children may confuse reality with their imaginary world, truth with lies.

But evidence is a puny concept to match against the hysteria brewing around this issue. The well-documented links between American fundamentalists and the British organisations with such cases suggest the satanic scare is merely the macabre invention of a bunch of febrile ritualists shadow-boxing with their *alter egos*.

The mundane horror of child sex abuse may be unpalatable to society without lurid trimmings. But the typical perpetrator of the crime is no berobed Antichrist, but Dad; its locus is not the woodland coven, but the back bedroom.

Radical sheep

This was the week when the motor of domestic politics slowly started to turn again. Edward Heath was, routinely, denounced as a traitor by his own party. Lord Young published his account of the 1987 election campaign, reviving the ludicrous Tebbit-Young spat about advertising agencies. And the No Turning Back group of Tory MPs published its proposals for the next election manifesto.

The purpose of the group (which contains 11 members of the government) may be to propel the Thatcherite revolution onwards, but, in reality, it has run into the sand. The proposals are a rehash of ideas that have been part of the Conservative right's agenda for the best part of a decade: private insurance in place of the welfare state; privatisation of prisons, the postal service, British Coal, London Underground, the profitable bits of British Rail plus anything they've forgotten; education vouchers; and more tax cuts. Yawn. Most of the items on the list have been chewed over a hundred times and rejected as impracticable.

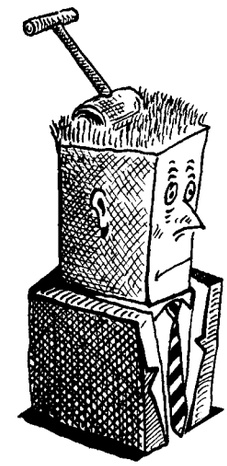
For Labour, it's a gift. Neil Kinnock can call on Mrs Thatcher to dissociate herself from the group and to condemn its ideas (what fun that must be, after years of similar treatment from the Tories over Militant). But she can't afford to for fear of provoking "Tory Split" stories—and it is not even clear that she would want to. But if she accepts its proposals, the next election is surely already in the bag for Labour. Who could ask for anything more?

Green blues

The Green Party's 1990 autumn conference, which starts this weekend, may be its last. High on the agenda is motion 36, billed as the "Green Party Split". The Green Party is practising the devolution it preaches, with the Scottish Greens now feeling strong enough to go it alone. Like last year, the motion to limit the conference to delegates, rather than allowing any individual member to turn up, is likely to be defeated. But as membership grows—it is now just under 19,000—party philosophy and practical constraints mean that the Greens are considering the abolition of the national conference in favour of several area conferences.

Since the 15 per cent showing in 1988, the Greens have slumped in the polls (to around 3 per cent) and the general perception is that their support is crumbling. The number prepared to vote Green nationally has dropped, even as the membership grows. Working against the Greens are Labour's and the Tories' new-found commitment to the environment (partly because of the threat of European legislation) and the reality of our electoral system.

All small parties need to find new ways to present and re-package themselves to remain in the public eye. The need is even more acute for the Greens, who are constantly in danger of having their ideas stolen by the other parties. But the consequence of this year's conference is likely to be that the party disinvents itself and returns to the days when it was, in effect, a pressure group. To take the heat off the other parties at this stage would be disastrous.



Lord Young's new autobiography presents its subject as an independent-minded man of action. Here he is talking to the Prime Minister about the public image of the Cabinet. "She said: 'Nigel's got to have a haircut—will you tell him.' 'No Prime Minister,' I said, 'you've got to tell him.' All right, I will but what about Kenneth Clarke; he's got to smarten himself up...' And then she went on about how we've all got to look good, and concluded by saying 'Well, I hope I look all right,' and I said 'Prime Minister, oh yes, you look all right, there's no problem with you.'" Hair today, gone tomorrow.

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POLITICAL COLUMN

The E-word

If Labour won't steal the democratic agenda from the Liberals, perhaps Mrs Thatcher will

Anthony Barnett

With the opening of the new political season, the entire landscape of constitutional reform is opening up before us. It may be a small matter in world terms, whether or not the British have their rights in law, or Scotland its own assembly. But the extraordinary intensification of domestic interest in questions of sovereignty is linked directly to the emergence of Europe and the end of the cold war.

These themes have been rehearsed by the Liberal Democrats in Blackpool, though their commitment to a written constitution has been flawed by Baroness Seear's intervention to save "expert" life peers from democracy. Paddy Ashdown and his colleagues will be mocked by other politicians who are quietly considering whether they should steal their clothes. Neither their civilised concern, nor the Greens' "Campaign for Real Democracy", will persuade the media to turn their attention to the way Britain is ruled.

With Labour apparently deciding to keep quiet (Kinnock signalled that he was open to electoral reform in the *Observer* on Sunday; "sources close to the leadership" issued denials in the Monday press), it is not the parties out of power that are setting the pace, but the advisers to the one that is in office and intends to stay there. They opened the way for the Tories to consider institutional reform with the Prime Minister's August speech in Aspen, Colorado.

An attempt to substitute a more positive approach to Europe for the negative image of the Bruges speech, Mrs Thatcher's Aspen address was overshadowed by the invasion of Kuwait and her meeting with Bush. Now her speech has been followed up by a document from the Institute of Economic Affairs—one of the right-wing think tanks whose work is attended to in No. 10. This has called forth Ferdinand Mount, who once worked for Mrs Thatcher. He dedicated his *Daily Telegraph* column to the need for Conservatives to take out their "pencil and paper" so as not to leave writing the constitution to "trendy radicals".

A key passage of the Aspen address was the Prime Minister's announcement that she will ask the East-West Helsinki summit this autumn to draw up a "Magna Carta" for Europe, that will "entrench for every European citizen, including those of the Soviet Union, the basic rights which we in the west take for granted".

When I read this I was reminded of Roy Hattersley. Just a year ago he announced that Labour's reforms would amount to a "Charter of Rights" that will "entrench" fundamental legislation through a complex replacement of the House of Lords. Both call forth charters —the one preposterous, the other pedestrian—both claim these will entrench our rights, both cannot bring themselves to propose an actual bill of rights for Britain—at least not yet.

But it will come. Two years ago, no leader in either of the two main parties conceded either the necessity for, or public interest in, such matters. Now both have used the E-word: "entrenchment". Yet the one thing our unwritten constitution famously does not do is entrench anything. Hattersley suggests we can get "entrenchment" by burrowing laboriously through the dead wood of the Lords. Mrs Thatcher goes over the top to "entrench" our rights alongside everyone in Siberia. But if both are evasions of the heart of the matter, both recognise that something is at issue that can no longer be dismissed as irrelevant for Britain.

Constitutional reform under the Tories will reproduce the old divisions between barons and peasants

Specifically, Mrs Thatcher proposes that her transcontinental Magna Carta will entrench for every individual "freedom of speech and thought". We all know that there is no freedom of speech in the UK. And even under Brezhnev there was complete freedom of *thought* in the USSR. Thought is private. We need not thank the Prime Minister for its protection here. What our thought and our talk need, are facts. We need freedom of information. It seems, however, that freedom of information will not be on offer to the peoples of Europe, at least not from Mrs Thatcher.

Another of Mrs Thatcher's Aspen fundamentals is that all individuals should have "freedom to participate in genuinely democratic elections". Formally democratic they may be, but elections in Britain are far from "genuinely" democratic when millions are disenfranchised by the electoral system.

Mrs Thatcher ends her brief list of freedoms with "freedom from fear of an overmighty state". Some fear her own overmightiness. Unless there is a right to know what the state is doing, it would be foolish not to fear it. The first principle of accountability is openness.

What we advocate for foreign societies, we must now also apply to ourselves. For we too are one of the Helsinki countries and part of the European Community. This is one of the strongest notes struck by the IEA report. "Constitutional reform," it concludes, is necessary here at home to project the values Britain stands for against "the centralising and bureaucratic pressures" of Brussels. Such talk conceals a recognition that Britain's constitutional arrangements simply aren't robust enough for Europe. Despite Mrs Thatcher's resistance to institutional reform, the IEA aims to draw her towards preserving her own revolution by inscribing the liberties she has supposedly returned to the British people in an entrenched constitution.

The danger is clear. Constitutional reform under the aegis of the Tories will preserve the undemocratic nature of the British state, limit participation and reproduce the old divisions between barons and peasants that the Magna Carta did little to rectify—for being a baronial settlement, it was not meant to do so.

In this respect, the Liberals' proposals do not go far enough. They appeal to reason, but fail to respond to the struggle for power that is also involved. The "absolute sovereignty of Crown in Parliament" has been punctured by the consequences of the Treaty of Europe. At the next Euro-summits, institutional as well as currency reforms will open the breach still wider.

Nature does not abhor a vacuum, hence the vast extent of outer space. But politics does. And in the new Europe that's coming, Britain has a vacuum where its constitution should be. It will be filled, perhaps sooner than expected.

I'm tempted to say that the writing is on the wall. But there is *no* writing on the wall. At the Fabian School in January, I warned that if Labour did not see there was no writing on the wall, the Tories would. I repeated the warning in the *NSS* in April. It will be ignored. But it remains true: the first party in power to write the constitution will write the future.

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TAKING LIBERTIES

Jolyon Jenkins

If you want an example of active citizenship, look no further than your local magistrates' court, where, day by day, ordinary men and women dispense justice to their fellow citizens—for no reward other than the satisfaction of a job well done.

That's the theory. But many lay magistrates are currently worked off their feet—not because of a surge in criminality, but because they have to issue liability orders for the poll tax (remember the poll tax?). These orders allow a local authority to seize your goods or earnings if you haven't paid the tax. The more intelligent magistrates must be starting to wonder why the criminal courts are involved in administering civil debt. Why aren't the cases being heard in the county courts, like every other civil debt?

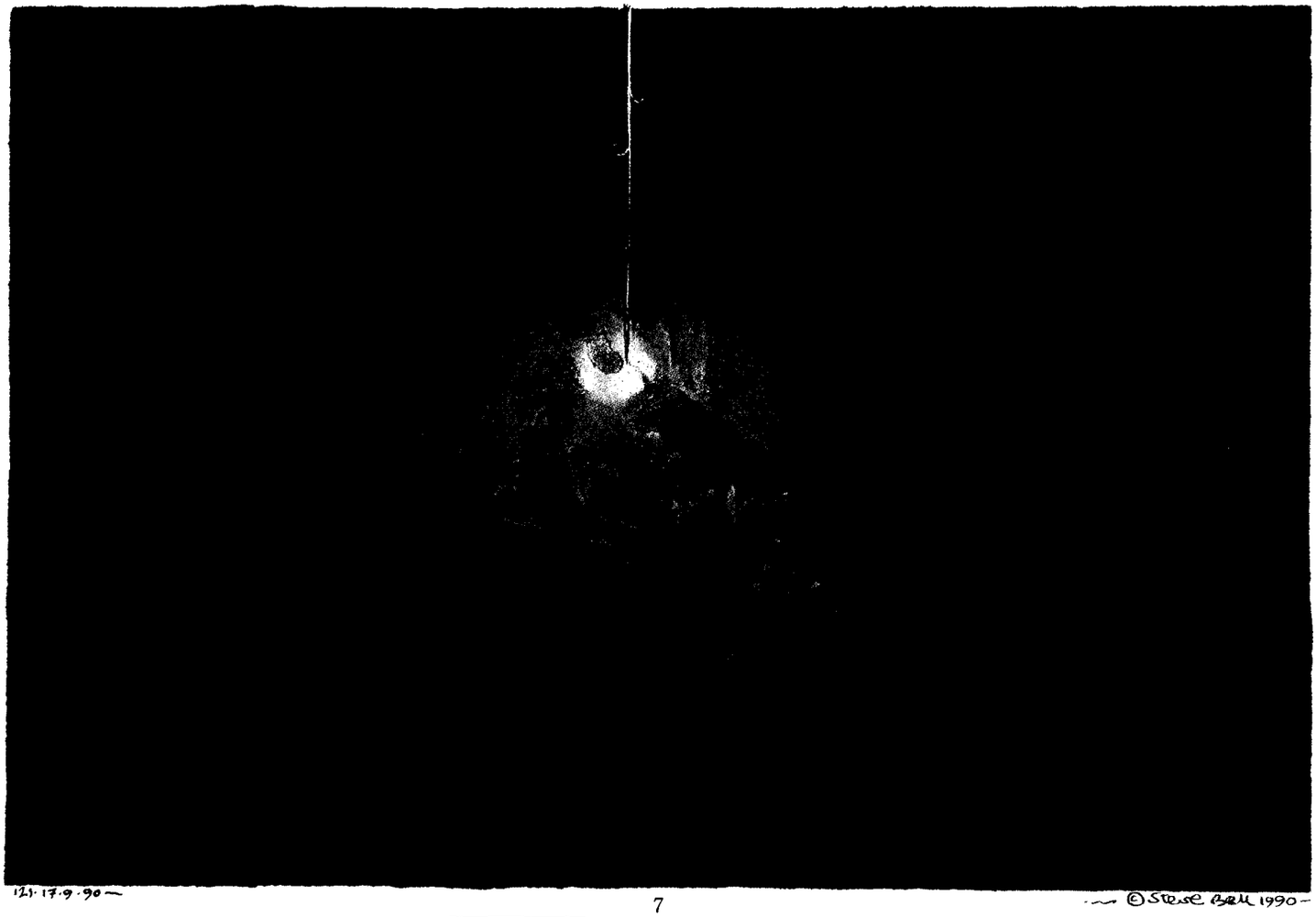
The reason is that the government long ago foresaw difficulties with collecting the tax and preferred to overload unpaid magistrates rather than paid judges. This was wise: according to early opinion polls, four million people had no intention of paying the poll tax. This is about the same number of people magistrates' courts deal with each year anyway. If all non-payers had stuck to their intention, the courts would have been completely swamped. But the beauty of magistrates, from the government's point of view, is that, unlike judges, you can always appoint more quickly—there's a long waiting list—and they don't cost much. The government also took the precaution of making the liability order process as mechanical as possible, with no room for argument. Under the old rating system there was at least the chance of stating your case in court, and the process had some semblance of being judicial. Not so with the poll tax: you are likely to be dealt with as part of a large batch.

The upshot is that magistrates are simply being used as an administrative arm of local government (which is in turn implementing central government's policies). Some councils have block-booked court time in order to push the business through quickly. The Association of District Councils has urged its members to liaise with local court officials to develop a streamlined procedure—including, for example, requiring people to state in advance what defence they intended to mount.

At this point, armchair constitutionalists like myself start to feel queasy: what about Locke, Montesquieu, and the separation of powers? Government and judiciary seem to be getting unhealthily confused.

This is true, but there are historical precedents. Thomas Skyrme, a former civil servant who for 30 years was responsible for appointing magistrates, writes in his definitive history of the magistracy that: "For centuries, the whole of local government in England and Wales was in the hands of justices of the peace, who were also the only body of people to whom central government could look as an instrument for implementing its general policy or securing its local and particular requirements." (In those days justices were local landowners, often pursuing their own personal interests.) Skyrme also points out that, before 1964, magistrates mostly sat in town halls, but that this gave the unfortunate impression to citizens that magistrates were simply part of local government.

The moral is perhaps no more than *plus ça change...* Or else that our constitution is in a God-awful mess. But you didn't need me to tell you that.



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DIARY

Ian Walker

I've been back from Central America a while now, living in a rented basement in Brighton, writing a novel, watching the changing colour of the sea plus a lot of junk television.

Much happened while I was away. *The Price is Right* and the Labour left disappeared from the screens. Euro-Marxists mutated into postmodernists, invested in Filofaxes and other post-Fordist accessories, while learning their new lines about the failure of meta-narratives. Chaos-theory and Australia both became fashionable. Hallucinogens made a comeback.

Since I have been back, the pace has been frantic. Arthur Scargill has been crucified and resurrected already as a deodorant commercial. The Communist Party is re-launching itself under a new brand-name. Friends of mine in Managua and East Berlin have started up their own businesses. The evil empire has dissolved into a collection of emergent democracies.

Replacement demons, however, have been proving difficult to cast. Islamic fundamentalists and various confusing stripes of PLO and Shiite terrorist and hostage-taker stood in for a while. Then General Noriega's friendship with Fidel became cause for concern. Preparing the ideological ground for the invasion of Panama, the International Drug Monsters took centre stage.

Colombian cocaine cartels (rather than the real big-shots in Miami who had collaborated in Oliver North's drugs-for-Contra-arms programme) provided devilish Uzi-toting colour. Nancy Reagan launched JUST SAY NO. The crack was mighty. You know what I'm building up to, right? The man of the moment, SH you-know-who.

First, I want to dwell on *la patria de Sandino*, where I lived for three years. You don't read much about it these days, but it did once spawn a whole range of T-shirts and fund-raising events. Earnest liberals in England (grateful that they no longer have to buy that bitter-tasting Nicaraguan coffee) ask me how come the Sandinistas lost the election?

Well, mothers had lost too many sons. There was nothing in the shops. Factory workers were making less than they had under Somoza. The revolution had brought nothing but dignity and transient fame to another small Latin American country persecuted by the gringos, whose current President, ex-head of the CIA, would now have us believe he is acting in defence of human rights, self-determination and an all-star cast of noble aspirations, including Messrs Freedom and Democracy.

Douglas Hurd, busily deporting Kurdish refugees last year as Home Secretary, champions the spirit of the Enlightenment and civilisation itself in his florid denunciations of the thief of Baghdad. Why do people (politicians, commentators and what-have-you) take any of this seriously? Do capitalist powers send their armadas to the Gulf because they are feeling suddenly sentimental about the plight of a few hundred thousand Wily Oriental Gentlemen (that lovely British acronym whose meaning has been extended in recent years to embrace Afro-Caribbeans and Asians of both sexes)?

I was, though, fascinated to discover that Mackintosh toffee is so popular in Iraq. I suppose these teeth-conscious years have been tough on the toffee-trade. The Mackintosh people probably had no option but to dump their unwanted suck on markets in the third world, always a resting-home for duff and dangerous products. Why else are bowler hats so big in Bolivia?

Paco phoned last weekend from New York. He's a Salvadorean who grew up in Spanish Harlem. He always phones from a public phone-box in the Port Authority Terminal. The home-boys down there possess numbers enabling anybody to make free international calls. The numbers have to be used quickly before the telephone-company computers lock on to the fraud, which they always do, but always too late.

The home-boys, by definition, don't have too many contacts overseas so they sell the numbers to other punters. Apparently it's a very cosmopolitan scene down there at the Port Authority Terminal: people from Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East, Latin America, all calling home.

Paco mentioned he'd seen Daniel Ortega on his recent trip to New York, where the ex-President was talking up his yet-to-be-written autobiography. Paco used to work for the Sandinista government, in the information department. A lot of decent people were working for the government in Nicaragua, the only country I ever visited which had nice cops. Since the victory of Violeta Chamorro, a new rural police, mostly composed of ex-Contras, has been created. Their job is to oversee the return of the agricultural cooperatives from the campesinos to their former landowners, who are all now hurrying back from Miami.

Posing as a *Sunday Times* journalist, I once infiltrated an advertising agency on behalf of a left-wing magazine, the *Leveller*. Royally entertained by my hosts, I drank their bourbon, went away and wrote a vicious and unkind piece. Ever since then I have felt sorry for ad-people, who so desperately want to be loved and respected.

Recently, however, I have been getting irritated by that guy from Ogle, Haggle and Bogart, the one with the expensive shirts and the Rolex, who is all over the art shows like a cheap suit. The flunkies interviewing him listen to this guru's pronouncements in hushed silence. Advertising, it seems, has achieved new glamour and *gravitas*.

Having bought my Sony portable with Teletext and remote, I have discovered you never have to look at another ad. You just zap them with the remote, enjoy a three-minute dalliance with a wildlife programme or documentary, then you can return to *Hollywood Wives*, or the football, or whatever you are watching.

After some practice you get this kind of built-in body-clock which knows when the three minutes are up. I pride myself on this facility. It's become one of my party pieces. If everybody with a remote adopted a similar strategy, it would surely do untold harm to the industry. JUST SAY NO. Zap the ads.

ROGER WODDIS

One of my best friends is a Tory

Ted Heath, former Conservative prime minister, suggested in a television interview that negotiating with Saddam Hussein ("not a Hitler") could help prevent war in the Gulf

I never thought I'd praise you, Ted,
For you are blue and I pale red,
And I detect a sense of strain
When hearing you conduct *Cockaigne*.
But now you strike a braver note
(Although you'll never get my vote):
You know the score, you have an ear,
You voice a universal fear.

The world is arming to the teeth,
Your critics cry, "That blasted Heath
Would have us meekly bend the knee—
It's force of arms that keeps us free!"
Appeasement is an ugly word,
Which nowadays is rarely heard,
Though those who staged the Munich farce
Were all for licking Hitler's arse.

Ben Franklin, wiser than we know,
Who died two hundred years ago,
Said death and taxes (leave out love)
Are all that we are certain of.
He would have added one thing more:
It's sure that those who yell for war
And beat the drum and flaunt their flags
Will not come home in body-bags.

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This community owes you money. Should you demand your pound of flesh?

Should hard-working, hungry people really be forced to 'tighten their belts?'

Should the Third World be giving the West more in debt repayments than we give them in aid?

Should 500,000 children every year have to die because of a bank loan?

Should British banks really be taking millions of pounds every year from the world's poorest countries?

Should you wish to learn more about the Third World Debt, send for our information pack.

Should you wish to help the Third World, why not write to your bank or your MP?

Should nothing be done, the situation will continue.

To: Christian Aid, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT (Tel: 071-620 4444). Please send me your free information pack on Third World Debt.

Name _____ Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

I enclose a donation of £ ____ to help those suffering due to Third World Debt.

OR NONM6B

Christian Aid

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The Carmen touch

Carmen Callil is the most powerful woman in publishing. Sarah Baxter says she inspires enthusiasm—and fear

Carmen Callil, the redoubtable managing director of publisher Chatto & Windus, is beginning to suspect that *The Beauty Myth* by 27-year-old Naomi Wolf may have been over-hyped. How can I tell? Not because she admits it (quite the reverse), but because she claims she had so little to do with the book.

"Did we compare it to *The Female Eunuch* on the cover?" she mused, over the telephone. "I don't remember. I didn't write the cover copy, darling, I really didn't... If you're going to write an article about me creating *The Beauty Myth* you're mistaken. You're really assuming I deal with everything, which is absolutely old-fashioned of you. That just isn't true." The cover, it may be recalled, actually states: "The direct descendant of *The Second Sex* and *The Female Eunuch*, this book is a cultural hand grenade for the '90s." It is unlikely that these words will have escaped her notice since it has often been said that if she could have published the latter, by her friend and fellow Australian, "Germs" Greer, as she calls her, she would have died a happy woman. Unfortunately, by the time Callil founded the feminist publishing house Virago in the 1970s, Germs was already a superstar.

It is beginning to look from the pasting Wolf's book has received that *The Beauty Myth* is more of a successor to *The Venus Syndrome*, published by Chatto & Windus four years ago. Written by the daughter of a millionaire Greek shipping magnate, Eugenia Chandris, who had experimented with liposuction and plastic surgery in a vain attempt to control her pear shape, it offered women the same revolutionary message, "You're beautiful just the way you are," before sinking without trace.

When she rants at authors they feel that she has their best interests at heart. The passion, the tantrums, all prove that she is totally besotted with publishing

Rumour has it that this flop prompted Callil to swear that she would never publish another beauty book, but after a decent interval, she was persuaded at auction to offer Naomi Wolf a £30,000 advance. "I don't think it's a lot of money for hardback and paperback rights," she told me indignantly. She didn't want to pass judgment herself, but thought there might be some truth in what a few friends had observed: that older feminists were jealous of the glamorous newcomer.

Callil herself is something of a feminist heroine, deservedly praised for founding the first women's publishing company. A supreme publicist, she packaged Virago books in their distinctive green jackets and persuaded a conservative literary world of the merits of female "modern classics", while targeting Virago's non-fiction at feminists. "Must Virago publish all those women's peace books?" Rosamond Lehmann, one of Virago's most successful "modern classics" authors, once sighed.

In 1982, she brought Virago into the Chatto, Bodley Head and Cape group, becoming managing director of Chatto. The group, minus Virago, which went independent in 1987, was then swallowed up by the American publisher, Random House. Today, Chatto is a small component of an even larger conglomerate, Random Century, after yet another publishing merger. It is a measure of her success that she, unlike some of her colleagues at Cape and Bodley Head, has survived at the helm of her company.

Chatto, however, has yet to make a profit during her eight-year reign. She inherited debts from her predecessor, the publishing veteran Nora Smallwood, and opted to spend her way out of trouble, casting aside the financial prudence (some would say tight-fistedness) still characteristic of Virago. Notoriously, she advanced Michael Holroyd £625,000 for his three-volume biography of Shaw (admittedly under instructions from Random House to secure it at any price). She also paid £90,000 for one of the Frankfurt Book Fair's "buzz" books, Christoph Ransmayr's *Last World*, which was not a success. But from the moment she arrived, installing her cherished collection of "art grotto" kitsch in Chatto's staid offices, the company's fusty, Bloomsbury image was blown away.

Authors and agents adore her, and not just because she sometimes pays over the odds for their books. Though her judgment may be erratic, she is devoted to her writers and often wakes up at 3am to type frantic missives to them. When she rants at them, as she frequently does, they feel, usually correctly, that she has their best interests at heart. The passion, the tantrums, all prove that she is totally besotted with publishing.

But Callil has little sympathy for the people who work for her, demanding the same monomaniacal dedication to their (often low-paid) jobs that she has always displayed. Chatto employees know better than to mention family and domestic life at the office, although cats, which she dotes on, are a different matter. She rules by fascinating and terrorising her staff.

Iris Murdoch's husband, John Bayley, is gratefully remembered for the time he came to the rescue of a hapless employee who had dropped a bottle of red wine on the thick, beige carpet at a publishing party at her home. He saw the look of blind panic on the young man's face as she approached, and volunteered bravely, "Dear me, I'm so sorry. How careless of me."

As an employee of Virago in the mid-1980s, working one floor up from Chatto & Windus's offices, I was keenly aware

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The Guardian

of her management style. "Sandra," she called me, unable or unwilling to remember my real name. I, at least, had a name: Chatto employees frequently received memos addressed to "Dear human being". On one celebrated occasion, a docile secretary posted a letter to a VIP bearing the same mode of greeting.

Tales of her treatment of staff have occasionally surfaced in *Private Eye*, including the story of how she fired an editorial director who had just left hospital after a major operation. But when I asked one former employee why so little had been published about her internal regime, he told me: "It's all down to that word 'fear'. Even though we've escaped, we're still afraid she's going to pop up and plague our lives." She hasn't, of course, but ex-members of staff confess that they remain obsessed by her.

At Virago, where she remains chair*man* of an all-female company, she used to call the general office assistant "slave". At Chatto, she would dispatch secretaries to purchase her cigarettes, tights and catfood. Mostly, she liked men: young, eager, good-looking helpers who would boost her image as a female dynamo. Her female secretaries were often abused and shouted at; her male secretaries would be gently chided. "You silly chump," she would say.

I put it to her that she hired and fired staff.

She was dumbfounded. "Do you know?" she turned away from the telephone to an unnamed assistant. "She says all my secretaries leave. This really is inaccurate." Turning back to the mouthpiece, she told me, "Nobody ever leaves here. They just stay on."

Earlier that day, I had spoken to one of her former assistants who had counted a 65 per cent turnover of staff in the two years she worked for Chatto, "mainly supplied," she said, "by the revolving door of Carmen's secretaries." I used to find several myself, weeping in the corridors. Junior members of staff were not the only ones to depart: two senior editorial directors left the company last year.

When I suggested staff were scared of her, she replied, to my amazement, "Scared? I hope so!" But when I asked, "What do you mean?", she laughed, embarrassed, "Don't you ever joke?"

In fairness, I should say that she really didn't want to be interviewed by me ("over my dead, prostrate body" were her actual words). But, though she declined to meet, she stayed on the phone and towards the end of our conversation struck a more wistful note. "I really don't like the public part of publishing," she said. "You get tired of it."

"What I loved," she continued, "was a different life, a different world, it was all different then. There are things that have become very unpleasant about publishing," she said, though she refused to elaborate. But, she added, "I'd never leave Chatto for another publisher."

If she did, the company would probably collapse. Even her harshest critics admit that she inspires people (with enthusiasm as well as dread). Thanks to her, Chatto is now as tense as a stretched piece of elastic: without her, it could be another loose and flabby publisher. Unlike Virago, which she endowed with a lasting identity, Chatto's success derives from her own idiosyncratic publishing style. Which makes Carmen Callil's claims about *The Beauty Myth* all the more unlikely. ●

"I don't really like the public part of publishing. You get tired of it"

Justine Picardie reviews *The Beauty Myth* on page 39

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A raider's life

Can you handle chickens? Yes, said Pat, and became one of the Animal Liberation Front's raiders. It was exhilarating, but the police got closer and closer

Blue flames danced around the cab. I stood mesmerised until I was blown backwards by the exploding lorry. I lay on the ground laughing

It was a shock to see him standing there, shotgun in hand. It was a greater shock when he started shooting at us. I knew that I had to be somewhere else pretty damn quick, even if it meant scaling a wall that would have been impossibly high if we weren't being shot at. For a moment I questioned what I was doing in someone else's farmyard at three o'clock in the morning, equipped to cause criminal damage. But not for long. I have always taken things to the limit and there hasn't been much in my life that can equal the exhilaration I felt while ALFing. I disposed of the black clothes and boltcutters—which we did on every raid—and got the hell out of the area.

This raid came early in the five years that I spent in the Animal Liberation Front. The process which led me to join ALF began when, as a 12 year old, I witnessed a calf collapse on to its knees in terror as it was led to slaughter at the local abattoir. I ran home in tears. Around four years later I saw a poster of a monkey with electrodes hanging out of its head. I found out who'd put it up and he asked me to join the local hunt saboteurs. I began sabotaging hunts and got into pretty small-scale stuff like gluing fur-shop locks.

Then, of course, there was the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection demonstration at Porton Down (the government chemical warfare establishment), where I discovered that ordinary people can exercise considerable power.

The demo began peacefully, but on this occasion we were no longer prepared to march ten miles just to stand outside and sing. Punks started pulling at the perimeter fences, which gave way surprisingly easily. The police on the other side ran—this was going to be our day! We tore through about six layered fences as the demonstration developed its own momentum. At the final fence, I knew this was as far as we were going to go. It wasn't just the infra-red beam on my heart from a government sniper's rifle; it would have been mad to expose ourselves to germ and chemical warfare, which, for us, unlike animals, is not a daily reality.

So I was ready to join when I was approached on a sab by the ALF. Their first question was, "Can you handle chickens?"—because, I learnt, many people have a phobia about birds and feathers. Battery chickens are especially disgusting: slimey to the touch, with sores and scarcely any feathers. Several new recruits were tested on my first raid; most of them went to pieces. Its purpose was publicity and we were accompanied by a journalist from the *Sunday Mirror*. (The newspapers were sympathetic to animal liberation then. They were later frightened off by the economic damage we did.)

As with my later raids, I was as nervous as hell as we drove to the farm, but once we got there it was quite surreal. I just

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did what I had to do and wasn't nervous again until we were making our getaway. The battery farm was ramshackle. I will always remember the disgusting stench and a plank of wood nailed across the opening hatches of the chicken cages. These chickens were permanently incarcerated. But there were holes in the top of the cages to allow farm-hands to remove the dead.

We liberated about 30 chickens on this raid. The only real danger came when we were asked to pose for photographs in the forecourt of the nearest service station, wearing balaclavas and holding the chickens and boltcutters under our arms. After which we left to relocate the liberated chickens on a free-range farm. I didn't like running unnecessary risks and decided to form my own cell.

Another publicity raid that I went on came when a highly toxic section of Porton Down was transferred to the densely populated area of Colindale in north London. The authorities claimed that security was adequate and the local people had nothing to fear. Yet in 15 minutes we had cut through the perimeter fence, sprayed "ALF has been here" on an outside wall, and left without being noticed. The disturbing thing was that, before we left, we pushed at a window that began to give way, which meant that anyone could have entered the place and perhaps spilled a canister that could have wiped out the population of London. The authorities denied that we had penetrated their plant. That is general policy on ALF raids. The police always advise people to deny that anything has happened, presumably to starve the ALF of the "oxygen of publicity".

It was problems with publicity that led me to the conclusion that the best way of fighting for animal rights was through economic damage and putting the bastards out of business. I've always been a perfectionist and really enjoy a job well done. I remember one raid on a battery farm that gave me immense pleasure. The farm had been cleared of chickens while a new electronic feeding mechanism was being installed. We chopped up the wiring and cut huge holes in the cages.

On the way out I spotted a brand-new lorry. It was too good a target to be missed. As everyone but my driver left, I siphoned some petrol from the tank into a milk bottle. I then cut the air-brake cables and threw the lighted petrol into the cab. Blue flames from the ignited compressed oxygen danced around the cab. I stood mesmerised until I was blown backwards by the exploding lorry. I lay on the ground laughing, then ran like hell.

We were offered cigars on our return to the ALF offices after this raid. They'd been sent by a woman who supported the ALF with the message, "Give these to the lads after a raid." Ours was an all-woman group and not one of us smoked cigars. The incident illustrates one of the misconceptions that people hold about the ALF—they assume that we're all young blokes who steam carelessly into farms. But the majority of people I worked with were women, sometimes elderly.

Quite a few of us were professionals, like a doctor and nurse who came on a raid on a fur farm where we knew that there was a pregnant woman. We planned all our raids carefully and cased every farm or laboratory for at least a week in advance. We had, for example, electricians who took out security systems for us.

The raids on scientific laboratories were always distressing. It was rarely possible to liberate the animals; all we could do was to put them out of their misery. I remember a raid on a lab at Colchester University where I saw mice with lumps on their backs as large as their heads. They were writhing in agony. Some animal liberationists believe that we should never kill the animals—it's playing God, they argue, but I had no qualms about injecting the mice with barbiturates.

In another lab I saw a sheep chained in a bath of sheep dip. Its eyes were caked together with the liquid and large flakes of skin were falling from its body. I met beagles which ran away from me because they assumed that all humans were going to harm them. I had to turn away from a monkey, beseeching me for help with its arms stretched out from its cage. How far would I get running down the high street with a monkey under my arm?

I saw mice with lumps on their backs as large as their heads. They were writhing in agony. I had no qualms about injecting them with barbiturates

You just have to ignore the pain and persist with your purpose. It is necessary to establish what they are researching behind closed doors and to pass the information on to legal pressure groups which can then bring it into the public eye. You can do a lot of economic damage just by publicising what is going on. No cosmetic firm wants the publicity of having its products associated with blinding or abusing animals these days.

I chose to join the ALF as it was the cutting edge of the animal rights campaign. Any liberation movement needs to work across a broad spectrum, which covers both legal pressure-group activity and direct action. Without the ALF's raids the movement would have grown stagnant. How many people would have been aware of the horrors concealed in battery farms, laboratories and other plants without the direct intervention of the ALF?

I finally left the ALF when I decided that I would be of more use working above ground than locked up in prison. As our raids became increasingly effective, the police got a lot better at dealing with us. Scotland Yard set up its own unit to deal with animal rights activists—they described us as "urban terrorists not connected with the IRA". There was frequently a car outside my house on Saturday mornings. The police began to follow me around the London Underground. I played "spy games" with them, leaping through barriers, jumping on and off trains.

But it had its serious side too. The last raid I went on was planned in parks, and we took our security arrangements to the point of paranoia. Only proven people were chosen to take part. Yet when we did a last-minute reconnaissance on the day of the raid, the place was staked out. Luckily my partner and I were dressed as if we were on a date and the police assumed we were just a courting couple. They asked us to leave the area. I felt that my luck had been exhausted and if I didn't get out then, I'd soon be living at Her Majesty's pleasure.

But I was also influenced by the emergence of groups like the Animal Rights Militia, which regard people as legitimate targets. I still believe in direct action, but attacks on people are not only unproductive, but impossible to justify. I subscribe to the principle, widespread in the animals rights movement, that no human being or animal should be harmed on a raid. We always took enough people on raids, for example, to make sure we could restrain guards without hurting them.

The British people regard themselves as animal lovers, but every day in this society animals are abused and slaughtered. Glossy advertisements disguise and even glamorise what's being done. This probably explains why they are always shocked when we confront them with battery chickens and mutilated foxes in shopping centres. The Animal Liberation Front has done much to make the public aware and has cost the exploiters dearly. For me personally it has shown what ordinary people like me can do, once we realise that we possess power and are ready to use it. ●

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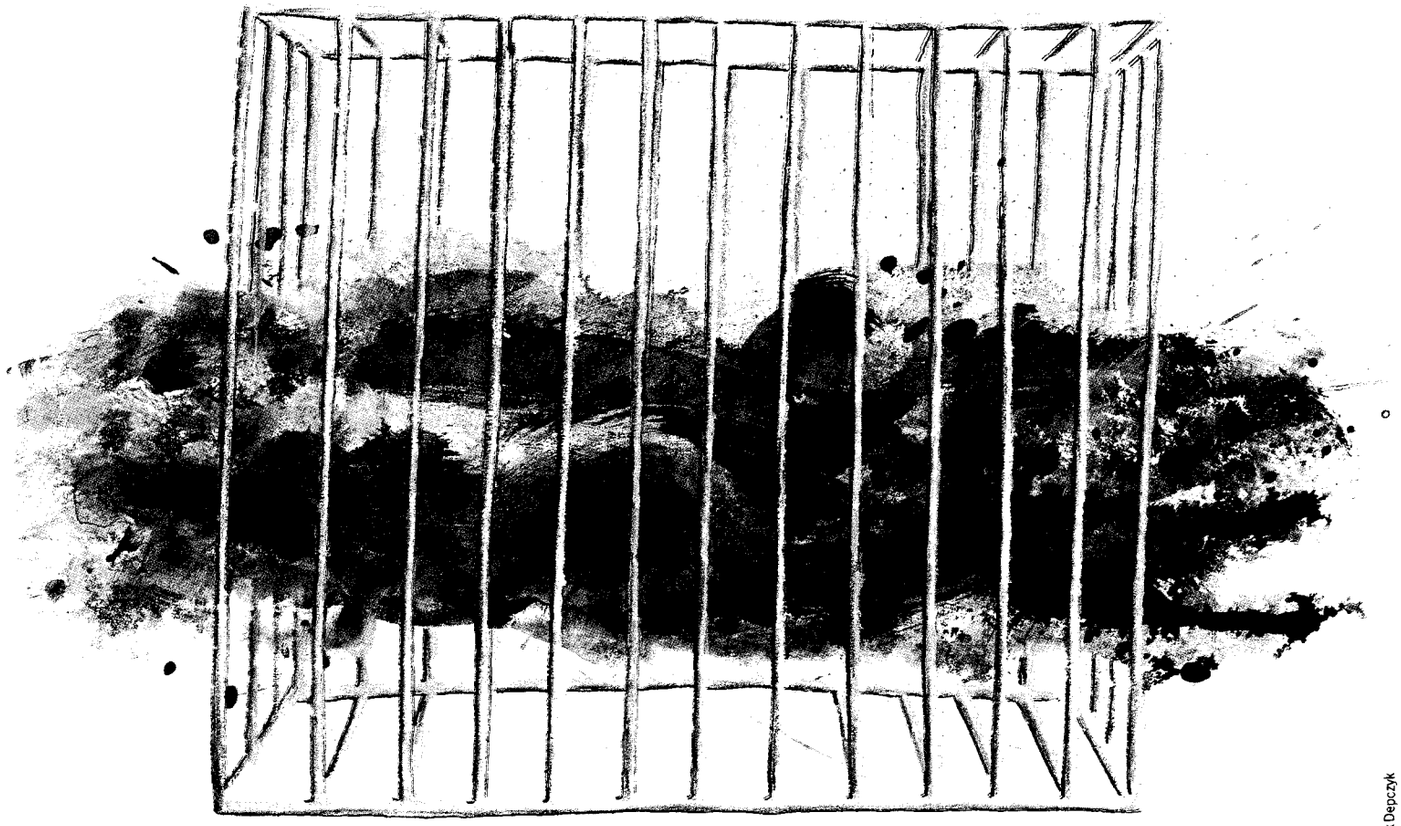

Jacek Depczyk

SOCIALISM

Walking without grace

Embrace the new Europe, which has dismissed utopias and does not depend on politicians and intellectuals, says Hans Magnus Enzensberger

No idea is dearer to the political class than stability. Kissinger and Brezhnev, Deng and Pinochet, Schmidt and Honecker could have easily agreed to that. But their successors too are united by the deep desire to remain in charge of the situation. A secret horror shakes the professional politicians of all countries at the thought that the sentence "We are the people" could be taken seriously. Where would it all end, if the people took the often-proclaimed right to self-determination literally?

The only answer to rule by the street is the water cannon; in an emergency other equipment can be made available too. All the apparatuses, whether in Beijing or Bonn, Leipzig or Paris, Sofia or Washington, are in fraternal accord with this unspoken conviction. And that is what is at stake when the planning staffs feverishly put together new "peace settlements", searching for "inner security" and an eternal "balance" that is supposed to put an end to the staggering forward motion. How nice it would be, if everything that was on its feet would let itself be "tied up", "fastened down", "integrated"!

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However, it seems very likely that the longed-for stability was always an illusion. Even if these cleanly regulated, clearly organised, immobile structures of domination did exist, at some time and somewhere, then today at any rate they have disappeared. The traditional conception of the state is facing a paradigm collapse, such as classical physics underwent long ago. The control, which the chancelleries worship, is proving to be a phantom.

The awkward impression which governments are making in the face of the recent changes in Europe is therefore not an accidental embarrassment which could be redressed by changing individuals around. It follows from the impossibility of forecasting the social process and controlling it from above. This is not only true for the extreme case. It also makes visible to all that the swaying, unsteady course of things is at once very normal and most unpredictable.

The spiteful glee of the intellectuals at the humiliation of politics by the tumble of events has stayed within bounds. It is not only the administrators of power who feel uneasy but the administrators of ideas too. No wonder; both imagined they could determine the direction society was to take; hence their traditional rivalry. They were quarrelling about the same privilege: that of defining and solving problems in the name of all the others.

As soon as a society comes in sight, which no longer allows any regulatory ideas to be imposed on it from outside or from above, then both these classes of persons see themselves deprived of their hereditary role. An evolutionary process which cannot be predicted, and can even less be planned, does not, it is true, make them superfluous, but it necessarily involves a considerable loss of authority and influence.

The intellectuals are, then, suffering from withdrawal symptoms just as much as the politicians. Moreover, whether they want to preserve what already exists or to overthrow it is irrelevant. It is not only the solid facts that are tottering. The flying carpet of utopia, too, has been pulled out from under the feet of those who have made themselves at home on it. Anyone who believes he has taken out a lease on the future is in an even worse position than someone who imagines he is called upon to act as guardian of what already exists.

Both had fallen for the illusion of the governability of the social sphere. Yet the losses to the left intelligentsia weigh more heavily, for the final goal, which they had in mind and which turns out to be mere make-believe, did not stand under the dictate of reality, but under the sign of hope.

The widespread complaint about the disappearance of utopias is understandable. Nevertheless, the lament easily clouds the vision of the lamenter. The often-heard assertion that one cannot live without a utopia is at best a quarter-truth. Because if one understands it to mean more than a straightforward dream of happiness, of paradise, then utopian thinking is by no means an anthropological constant. It is universal only in its claims. In fact it is a specific product of a very particular culture. As the name indicates, it was a Greek idea, which later on experienced a relatively brief flowering on our continent, from Bacon and Campanella to Fourier and Marx.

At its height, this mode of thought produced a series of schemes for society which were worked out in fantastic detail. In these thoroughly planned models there was an optimum of regulation of life from conception to death, as if the happiness of mankind could be got going with the precision of clockwork—an idea that should really put all worshippers of stability in a state of rapture.

That this way of thinking has been far from ineffective should need no emphasis. Its export to the most remote parts of the world is one of the most devastating results of European culture.

All the same, it would be an event of great significance if the Europeans too now discarded their obsession. It is not true that with such a self-correction they would surrender their desires. What would fall victim to it would first of all be the most fatal elements of utopian thinking: the projective megalomania, the claim to totality, finality and originality. (The "revolutions", which are now shaking the western half of Europe, have not brought forth any new demands. The only demands are those of 1848, which have remained unfulfilled until now.)

Instead of hoping for salvation from a single forceful idea, people would rather put their trust in an infinitely complicated, self-correcting process, which not only knows progress, but also retreat, not only grabbing what one can get, but also restraint. It may be that such a way of walking lacks grace. Nature plays tricks, the human being stumbles; without a degree of chaos there can be no self-organisation.

But the farewell to utopia also has an ironic aspect. Its loss has also, in quite an odd way, brought about its fulfilment.

The hero is granted what he wants but in a way that either he doesn't recognise it or doesn't know what to do with it

The simple common-sense insight, that things always turn out differently from what one had expected, thereby comes to a head in a manner that no philosophy of history can cope with. To fully appreciate the position it is necessary to turn to the tellers of fairy tales.

A hero, whose circumstances are not enviable, meets a fairy who has nothing better to do than to promise him the fulfilment of these wishes. For some kind of magical reason these wishes are always three in number. There is probably no one to whom this story is unknown; the twist is that the fairy sticks exactly to her promise to the point of pedantry. One cannot even accuse her of cheating. The hero is granted what he wished for, but always in such a way that either he does not recognise it or does not know what to do with it, which usually puts the dupe into a helpless rage. Three central promises of the European utopias have been fulfilled in a similarly disagreeable way.

The withering away of the state

One would have to look with a magnifying glass for anarchists who resolutely believe in a future world from which every form of domination has disappeared. But at the same time the forms of political domination have become strangely diffuse. To that extent we are dealing with, to borrow a term from anthropology, acephalic societies. The state is first to be affected. Its sovereignty, which was once its pride and joy, no longer counts for much, and the more intelligent of its representatives avoid, with good reason, using the words "sovereign power". Bound by a thousand threads like Gulliver, their room for manoeuvre grows ever smaller. That can be seen most clearly in countries whose political traditions were destroyed by their own efforts and outside help, a catastrophe which, as has since become evident, can have certain advantages.

The West Germans have drawn a noteworthy conclusion from their problematic situation by raising the most inconspicuous of places to be their capital city, and one can only hope that they leave the state in the village, where it belongs.

At all events there is no longer any state in Europe which expects of its citizens that they "believe" in it, and even the boldest government spokesman would begin to stutter if he had to repeat Hegel's dictum that the state is "God becoming visible". Servitude has disappeared along with the halo.

Yet, as in the fairy tale, the official denial follows close on the heels of the fulfilment of the wish: the disenchanted state is very far from withering away. It is true that the contention

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that some individual could "lay down the guidelines of politics" has become pure fiction; but at the same time the "administration of things" expands further and further.

Internationalism

The great European utopians were not local patriots. The social orders which they devised were not supposed to make one or other stretch of land happy, but the whole human race. This principle was most consistently formulated by proletarian internationalism. This promise too has found an ironic fulfilment. Not the workers, but the capitalists and technologists of all countries have put it into practice. More than a hundred years ago, without fanfares and brass bands, the World Postal Union, probably the first global organisation, was founded in Berne and it has functioned smoothly up to the present day, regardless of political conflicts and ideological differences.

Equally effective miracles were worked by the anonymous officials to whom we owe worldwide air traffic and telecommunications networks. Neither the First nor the Second nor the Third International established the idea of a world society; what has been established is the anonymous world market, symbolised by a handful of iconic brand names and dominated by the multinational companies, the big banks and the parastate finance organisations.

Equality

It is superfluous to provide evidence yet again of increasing social polarisation, even in many rich countries, or describe the desperate situation of many underdeveloped nations. But while real equality cannot be said to exist anywhere, a parodic version of the ideal has been realised in the industrial societies. That can easily be demonstrated using the example of road traffic.

Decades ago, traffic lights and traffic jams assumed power over just and unjust, rich and poor alike. This despotism is decentralised and guided by no overall interest, it knows no exceptions and pays no regard to class-position or origin.

Decades ago, traffic lights and traffic jams assumed power over just and unjust, rich and poor alike

The Trabant ready for the scrap heap is no more subject to this despotism than the £100,000 luxury model. Social difference shrinks to an imaginary gain in distinction. The marginal utility of money and power sinks; neither offers protection against the risks of the future.

Even the differences, which consumerism has to offer, are becoming more and more illusory, at least in the richer countries. The writer Henryk Broder could recently assert, without anyone contradicting him, that the junk-food chain McDonald's has realised the principles of socialism in their purest form. It offered everyone, without respect of person, regardless of status, race, gender, nationality, the same product, the same service, the same quality, at the same price. It could therefore claim for itself the famous revolutionary slogan: To serve the people!

Disappointments can be overcome; but when old wishes are fulfilled in such a malicious manner as in the fairy tale, then frustration turns to hysteria and anger.

That is evident, since the fall of the Wall, in the shrill and sterile debate on the unity of their country which German intellectuals are conducting. What is remarkable about this discussion is precisely its lack of productive substance, its regressive character, its resentful tone, its inability to deal with a new situation. It has no useful suggestions to offer. It is to be taken seriously only as a symptom.

"Never again Germany!" proclaims the group calling itself the Radical Left. The declaration begins with a comparison: "In the Federal Parliament, a pan-German coalition of all the parties sang the Deutschlandlied—just as once on 4 August 1914, during the first world war, and just as on 17 May 1933, to endorse Hitler's foreign policy declaration.

The intellectuals, against whose "nationalist intoxication" the Radical Left is warning, behave like mirror images of their spiritual brothers. Common to both is a negative or positive fixation on the unified German state. Both fight over the altar of the Fatherland, as if this piece of furniture had not long ago become an anachronistic sham. (A further common feature of these feuding brothers is their cultural critical contempt for the base materialism which the German exhibits—an aversion to his taste for the Deutschmark and for that worst of all evils, "the pedestrian precinct".)

In complete contrast to the hysteria of their élites, the majority of Germans have displayed a measure of insight and reason, in an extremely critical and potentially dangerous situation, that hardly anyone would have believed they were capable of.

Flag-waving parades of patriotic intent, or mass meetings against the threatened Fourth Reich were not to be sighted in the west of the country, and the noisy minorities who stepped in front of the cameras in the east were at most a sign of the backwardness of a political culture with almost 60 years of dictatorship behind it. On the whole the "masses" have simply ignored the slogans of the spokesmen with an unshakeable scepticism. Instead they promptly got down to the necessary cleaning-up operations.

After all, it was not the helpless state apparatuses on this side and on the other that later realised what had to be done. It was society which, from one day to the next, took things in hand itself: the village mayor who, on his own initiative, had the damaged street surface, the ruined bridge repaired; the joiner who got the broken circular saw on the other side of the border going again; the generous helper and the dubious speculator; the volunteer doctor and the inevitable black-market dealer. As always, it is practical reason that links telephone networks, swaps newspapers, changes money, undertakes journeys and concludes agreements, spontaneously, without regard for ten- or 20-point plans and that is precisely why it is effective, even unstoppable. This society could not give a damn which badges of sovereignty are on a cap, which eagle decorates a postage stamp, how many delegations are going to the United Nations, and what Hegel would think of it all, and as far as the symbolic dimension is concerned, the Brandenburg Gate was just about good enough for a collective drinking spree, which was followed the next day by a lasting sobering-up.

The élites who have been left behind look on this spontaneous activity with understandable displeasure; because what comes to the surface is not the anticipated radicalism or the longed-for profundity, but ordinariness. The Germans do not care about the spiritual space of the nation or the idea of socialism, they are not interested in questions of faith at all, but in work, housing, pensions, wages, turnover, taxes, consumption, dirt, air, refuse. What this means is contradictory interests, reservations, fears, complexes and conflicts are finding an outlet.

The prospect that the Germans might eventually become politically mature evidently causes both politicians and intellectuals a great deal of trouble. They will have to reconcile themselves to the the banal fact that democracy is an open, productive, risky process which is self-organising and which evades their control, if not their influence.

And as far as walking without grace is concerned, it was demonstrated most effectively of all by those Germans who, before 9 November 1989, disregarded state power, started out across the border, staggering under the weight of their plastic bags, and upset every prediction. The millennium has not broken out with these runaways—only an everyday normality, which can survive without prophets. ●

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Do you know anyone who has a terminal illness?

From 1st October 1990, a person with a terminal illness (someone who suffers from a progressive disease which is likely to cause death within six months) will be able to claim £37.55 Attendance Allowance per week **immediately.** The normal six months qualifying period will not apply to them.

In order to claim under this new provision, a medical report (DS1500) will be required from the patient's doctor. This will be completed free of charge for the patient. It should then be sent to the Department of Social Security with the Attendance Allowance claim form (DS2).

The usual Attendance Allowance medical examination and report will not be necessary in most cases. This means that decisions on claims can be made more quickly.

Special provision has been made for a representative (a carer for example) to claim on behalf of the terminally ill person. No mention of terminal illness is made in the DS1500 report or the DS2 claim form. Patients do not have to be told the nature of their condition.

These new provisions are intended to help terminally ill people. So, if you know anyone who you feel should claim, make sure their doctor fills in the DS1500 report. You can also help by ensuring these forms are completed and sent off without delay.

The new Attendance Allowance claim pack (DS2) will be available from September from any Social Security office, or by calling 0800 666 555 free of charge.

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POLITIKEN

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The same goes for 11 other leading titles from across the Continent and across the political spectrum.

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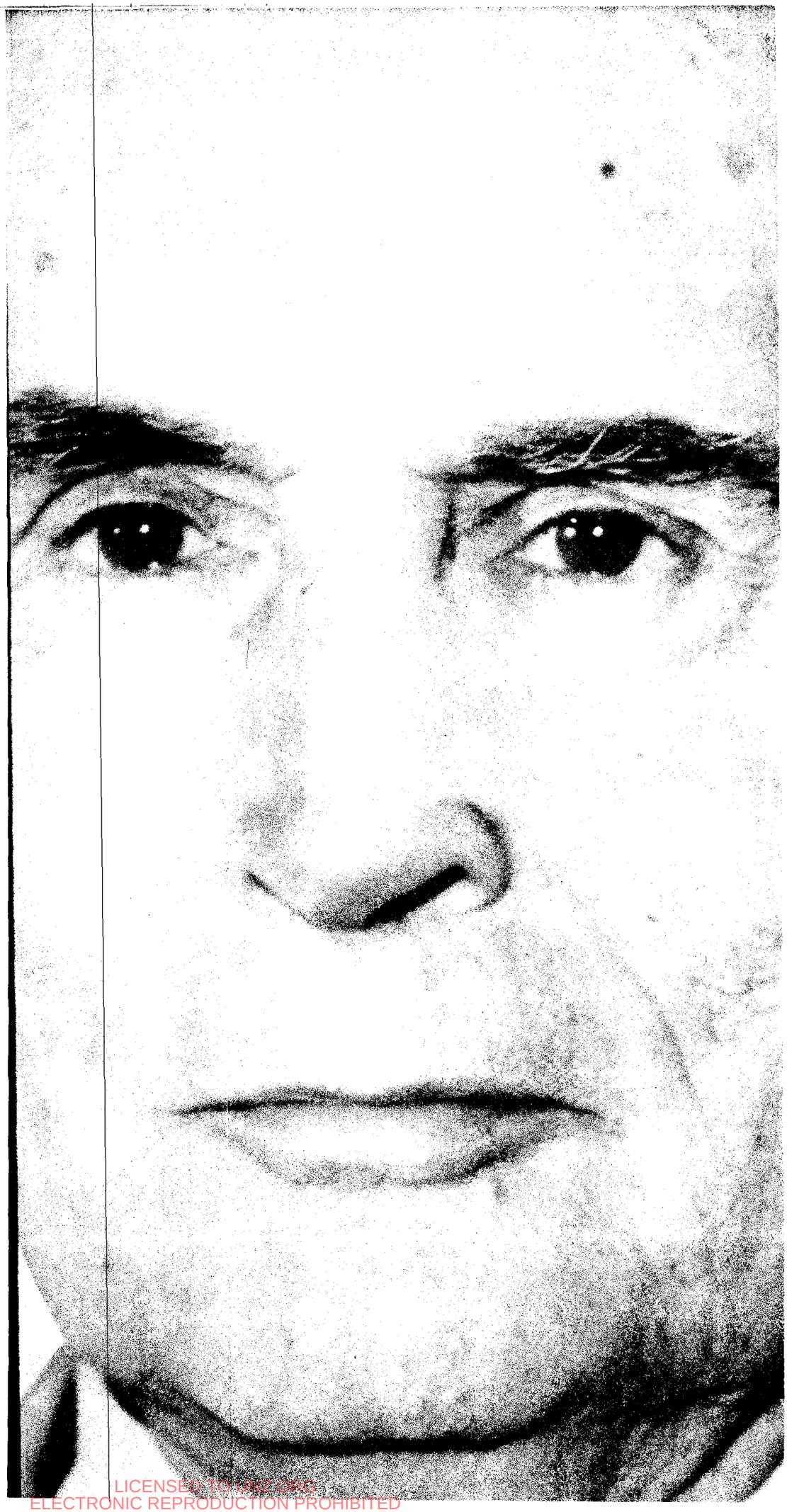
Guardian Europe. Every Friday in our second section. For Europe's point of view. Not ours.

The Guardian Europe



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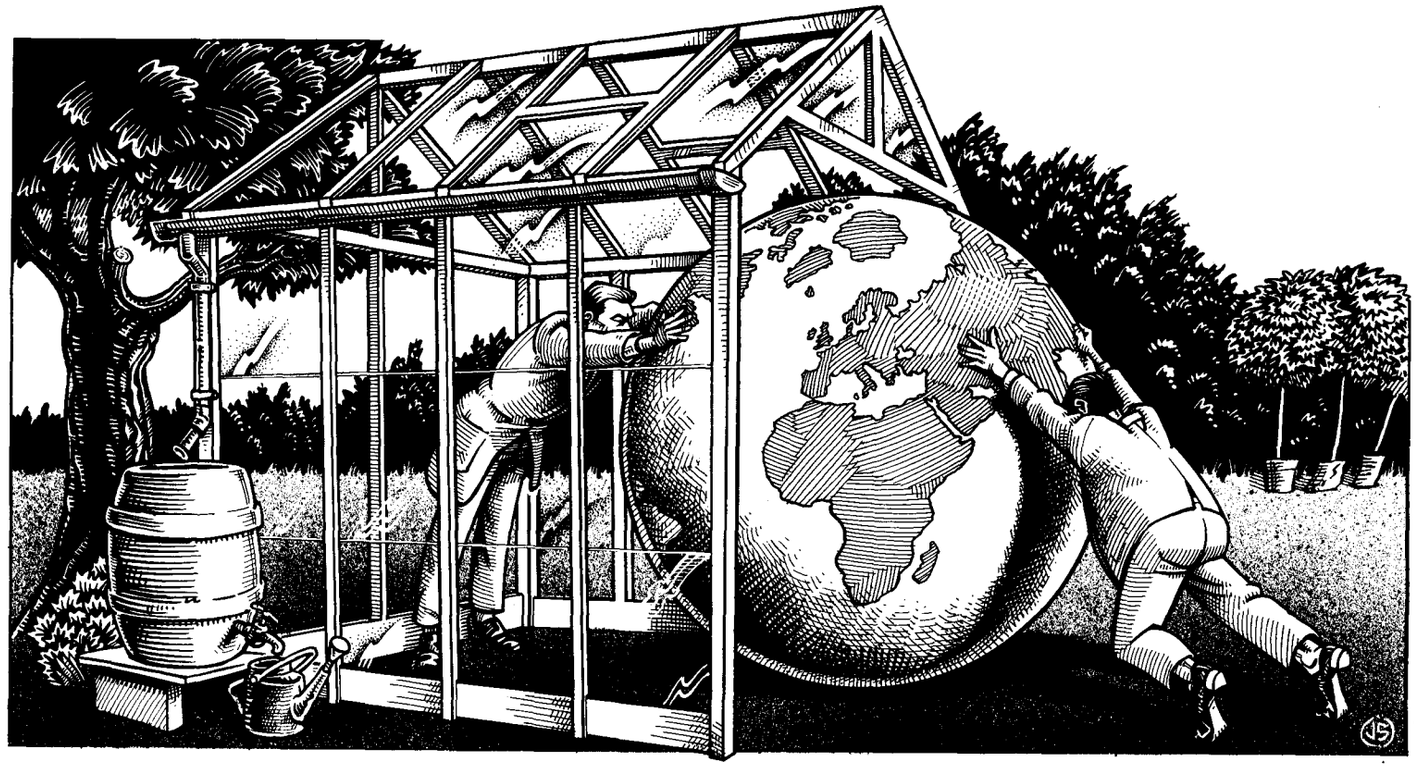

ENVIRONMENT

The greenhouse war

Is there a greenhouse conspiracy? Vicky Hutchings gets involved in the scientific stone-throwing over global warming

One hundred and seventy scientists can't be wrong—or can they? Next week, the world's scientific community publishes *Climate Change*, the most definitive assessment yet of the notorious "greenhouse effect". The consensus is that the earth overall has warmed by half a degree in the past 100 years: that doesn't sound much, but it's actually a significant increase (we are, for example, just 4°C away from the last ice age). More to the point, carbon-dioxide levels, which have risen by nearly a third over the same period, are still rising. Carbon dioxide is the main "greenhouse" gas. Scientists predict that the earth will warm by between 1.5 and 4.5° C if we allow carbon-dioxide levels to double. This has been the view of most scientists since 1979.

But now this rare degree of unanimity is being denounced as "the Greenhouse Conspiracy", most vigorously in a recent Channel 4 *Equinox* programme. The few scientific critics of the greenhouse consensus are being given platforms to question the climate models used, to urge caution and even to argue that the "feedback" effects of warming, like more clouds, might make the world *cooler*, not hotter.

The campaign against greenhouse warming is further advanced in the US than here. Reducing carbon-dioxide levels means reduced industrial and economic activity or costly new energy-efficient measures, or both; and American big business wants to maintain business as usual. Ideologues around Bush believe that environmentalists are reds in disguise. They fear the return of latter-day New Dealers seeking to overthrow all the tax cuts and deregulation brought about under Reagan. Influential newspapers like the *Washington Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* have taken up this theme. The purpose is to stifle all discussion of policy responses to greenhouse warming as premature.

This is where the critical scientists are so useful. In any major scientific inquiry, there are naturally dissidents. Moreover, the scientific discourse is cautious and heavily qualified. No one, least of all the 170 scientists who have drawn up *Climate Change*, argues that the case for global warming is fully proven or denies that many questions remain. But they also recognise that if they wait for 99 per cent certainty, the greenhouse effect will be unstoppable.

In the UK, the right-wing think tank, the Institute of Economic Affairs, last year put out a pamphlet, *Mounting Greenery*, which by judicious quoting of published misprints, irrelevant facts and genuine scientific caution, sought to show that calls for a decrease in greenhouse-gas emissions were apocalyptic rhetoric that would choke people's efforts to establish a higher standard of living for themselves.

The Greenhouse Conspiracy **was broadcast in the Channel 4 *Equinox* series in August 1990. It was produced by TVF Ltd, an independent television company, founded eight years ago by Hilary Lawson.**

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British Coal has also urged "a more cautious approach" to reducing the greenhouse gases produced when coal burns. Last week, it invited Dr Robert Balling, a climatologist from Arizona State University, to come across and tell the public of his "scepticism about the greenhouse effect". Unfortunately for British Coal, Dr Balling was not the sort of sceptic we had been led to expect. He stood solidly by the greenhouse consensus. How could such a public-relations howler have been made?

The answer may lie in the Channel 4 *Equinox* programme. Dr Balling took part and his comments were edited so that he appeared to be saying the opposite of what he believed. It was directed by, produced by, and featured Hilary Lawson doggedly seeking out the truth behind fears of the greenhouse effect. In the classic manner of the best documentary-makers, Lawson tried to prove that the evidence for past warming is unreliable, if not non-existent, and that there is no proof that sea levels have risen. The programme claimed that the climate models from which future warming is predicted are so seriously flawed that they deny the Sahara is a desert. Finally, it argued that more carbon dioxide is good for us—and our crops. Four well-known critics of greenhouse warming presented their views unchallenged and a fifth was quoted. No one, for example, mentioned that CO_2 encourages weeds too.

You and I don't know the truth, the programme attempted to show, because of an alliance of vested interests. Scientists get more government research grants if they come up with scary scenarios. The media love to write about disasters. Politicians like to have big issues to deal with. The few brave scientists who speak out against the consensus get their funding stopped, their papers suppressed, and are ostracised by their peers: a new McCarthyism is at work. None of this was substantiated. But still Lawson has had real influence. He wrote a two-page article in the *Sunday Times*—which was followed by others in the *Observer* ("CO_2 is good for you") and *Today* ("Cold facts about global warming").

Dr Stephen Schneider, from the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Colorado, and Professor Tom Wigley, director of the climatic research unit at the University of East Anglia, say that they took part in Lawson's programme under the impression it would be a balanced look at the arguments underlying the greenhouse warming scenarios. Schneider claims: "I didn't have any difficulty in refuting Lawson's arguments, in giving it back to him." But Schneider says this part of his interview never appeared: "If they'd put the whole thing on, they wouldn't have looked so good."

Wigley is incensed by the way the half a degree rise in global temperature over the past 100 years was set up as the central plank supporting greenhouse warming and then rubbished. He says scientists don't invoke the rise as *definitive* proof of the enhanced greenhouse hypothesis, since there's a chance that "natural variability" might be the cause. What they are saying is that if the greenhouse theory is right, this sort of warming is what they might expect.

Lawson's programme used recent information from satellites to discredit the warming figures recorded by earth-bound weather stations. A graph, purporting to show the difference between the two sets of data, contrasted the ten years between 1979 to 1988. Earth-bound thermometers showed a sharply upward warming trend of 1.2°C; the satellite record showed no warming.

Dr Roy Spencer from NASA was used to give scientific backing to Lawson's divergence theory. But Spencer tells me that he told Lawson that *both* records might well be true, since they were measuring "oranges and apples": the earth-bound thermometers, temperatures at the surface, and the satellites higher up "mid-layer" temperatures. The surface trend in any case, he says, is only one- to two-tenths of a degree and the graph shown was wrong. The satellite trend for the same period, while "flat to all intents and purposes", also shows an upward trend of a few hundredths of a degree. Like Wigley, he thinks the agreement between the two sets of records is astonishingly good: "When they were here, we had just gotten those results. I guess they thought it was a big deal. They really shouldn't have."

Lawson also stated that weather stations in towns gave distorted readings because urban areas are hotter than the surrounding countryside. Scientists know this and make allowances for it (though possibly not enough). He failed to mention the marine data, which cannot suffer from urban warming, and so concluded that the difference between the surface and satellite records cast doubts on the thermometer record of the past century.

Enter Robert Balling, who was filmed saying: "We have to be careful when we look at people who say they have detected global warming, because what they may have detected is urban warming." But anyone who assumed Balling, as British Coal may have done, was refuting the evidence of global warming would be wrong. Like most scientists, he is concerned to be absolutely accurate. Of the half a degree warming, which he doesn't dispute, he told me: "I would guess a tenth of that, no more, could be related to the urban effect."

A new McCarthyism is at work. Vested interests force scientists to come up with ever more scary scenarios—or to shut up

No one denies that forecasting the next century's climate is fiendishly difficult: the models are still far too crude. None yet totally reflects what effects clouds, ocean currents, water vapour and sunspots could have: whether they will encourage warming or slow it down. But the example from the UK Met Office that Lawson used to demonstrate the models' general uselessness showed, he claimed, that the Sahara wasn't a desert. It predicted that the same amount of rain would fall there during the summer months, after a doubling of carbon dioxide, as in Scotland. But watchers were not informed that this model is out of date and later, more sophisticated ones don't show this. They would also not have known that "low resolution" models, like this one, average out rainfall over vast areas. This, although it obscured the widely diverging rainfall patterns over north Africa, could never have been interpreted as suggesting the Sahara was not a desert. Well, it ought not to have...

Besides questions over editing, the programme contained serious factual errors. It claimed that the global average temperature fell "fairly sharply" between 1930 and 1970. This is simply not true. It had a graph showing average world temperatures in 1940 were the same as in the late 1980s. Again, this is false. It leapt from the acknowledged difficulties of measuring the sea-level rise to saying that it was impossible to measure it. It jumped from the fact that, throughout history, temperatures have fallen and sometimes risen *before* carbon-dioxide levels followed suit, to claiming that this proved carbon dioxide doesn't affect temperature. It proves nothing of the kind.

Hilary Lawson has lately promoted himself as a defender of the hard-hitting documentary against the numbing effects of the "impartiality" clause in the Broadcasting Bill. This enforced neutrality, he fears, may turn such programmes into sounding boards for conventional wisdom. Lawson has every right to set out to debunk the theory of global warming, but he has also to show far more respect for the views of those he is debunking than he has in his programme. Otherwise, however eloquently he defends the principle of free expression on television, he will do far more to harm it by what he does as opposed to what he says. ●

***Climate Change: the scientific assessment* will be published on 24 September by Cambridge University Press, £15 paperback. This is the final report of the scientific working group of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organisation.**

The IPCC was set up in November 1988 to draw up reports on global warming in time for a World Climate Conference in Geneva this November. The IPCC was split up into three working groups to consider the science, the likely impact, and the strategies for responding to climate change.

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Dead and alive

Chileans have re-buried Salvador Allende, but his soul goes marching on, says Ariel Dorfman

When General Augusto Pinochet ordered the body of Salvador Allende to be secretly buried in a grave by the sea the night of 11 September 1973, he could not have imagined that the very President he had just overthrown, and whose legacy he was confident of extirpating forever from the memory of Chile, would someday be given a tumultuous second funeral in which many of the very people who had contributed to his downfall would honour him. It only took Pinochet a few hours to be rid of the man he had betrayed: it would take the Chilean people 17 years of resistance to rescue Salvador Allende from the anonymous earth he had been banished to, because, in order to do so, first they had to accomplish the more dangerous task of rescuing the democracy their President had died to defend.

On 14 March of this year, as soon as Patricio Aylwin, Chile's new democratic President, entered La Moneda, the Presidential Palace where Allende had died, plans for a public farewell and burial were started. Aylwin's first visitor was Allende's widow, Tencha—and his words of greeting to her were: "I owe Salvador a funeral." And he kept his promise: the man who, as President of the Christian Democratic Party in 1973, had led the opposition to Allende, would be the main speaker at Allende's funeral.

Most Chileans expected the family to choose 11 September—the anniversary of Allende's death—as the date for that funeral. It was a fitting way, they thought, of closing and completing a circle that had been broken. But Allende's kin showed a deeper wisdom and chose 4 September instead, the day when Chileans have, for most of our independent history, held our Presidential elections. It was on that date, exactly 20 years before, that Allende had become the first socialist in world history to have come to power in democratic elections, opening up the breathtaking possibility that deep structural change could be achieved through peaceful means. To hold the ceremony that day was to reaffirm Allende's democratic credentials and therefore to deny the legitimacy of the military intervention—which had been contrived, carried out and justified by Chile's conservative forces, with the enthusiastic aid of Nixon, Kissinger and company—as the only way to save the country from "communism". All the horrors that were to follow could henceforth be trumpeted as the lesser of two evils, authoritarianism as the unfortunate remedy to stem the tide of totalitarianism—as long, of course, as Allende could be painted as a Marxist autocrat.

In the midst of the clenched fists and slogans of the crowd, I had the dizzying sensation that time had stopped

Allende's public rehabilitation drove the Chilean right-wingers and assorted Army generals into a veritable frenzy. In a barrage of ludicrous statements over the past months, they have accused the Allendistas, with the acquiescence of the Christian Democrats, of wanting to "rewrite history"—as if history belonged only to the people in power and they had themselves not spent the past 17 years rewriting it with bullets and censorship.

On the day of the funeral, watching the calm, fervent crowds, the photographs hidden inside mattresses all these years and finally held aloft as the coffin went by, the old man crying into a Chilean flag crumpled in his hands, the youngsters who had not been born when Allende disappeared calling out his name like an incantation against death, the thousands of the dirt poor that lost a day's pay so they would be able to tell their grandchildren that they had been here, the women in wheelchairs pushing themselves towards Allende's new grave as if it were heaven, I wondered at the miracle of it all, how these people had kept Allende's memory burning in the midst of despair and terror. I wondered at the millions of hours they must have waited for this day, while the soldiers ravaged their land and families. Allende had survived because these people had survived.

It had been exactly 17 years since his supporters had last seen Salvador Allende alive. I had been among the million shouting marchers who had poured into the streets of Santiago on 4 September 1973, to celebrate the third anniversary of our electoral victory. That night it had taken the group I had joined seven fervorous hours to reach the balcony of La Moneda where Allende was saluting the multitudes. We marched by singing and chanting and unfurling flags, and, for a magic moment as we passed by our leader, we somehow convinced ourselves that we could still change the history of humanity and free our country from the misery that had plagued it ever since we could remember. Then we looked back and saw him there, standing alone on that balcony, and something unspoken and grievous inside every one of us made us turn the corner and go around the block and mingle with the next overflowing column and pass by again one long, last time. Our hoarse voices might roar over and over that the people united would never be defeated, but what we were really doing that night was saying goodbye to our President. We must have known deep inside that Allende's days were numbered, that all our days were numbered and that those who were doing the numbering and would soon do the killing were the military.

Of the all too many who were to die in the years ahead, Allende would be the first—probably having committed suicide, although there are still recalcitrant souls who insist that he was murdered by the Army. For those who were to be tortured and exiled and jailed, for those who were expelled from their jobs, for those whose relatives were to

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die far from home or were to be denied a tomb, for those who had to hush their own children out of fear, Allende remained for almost two decades a symbol both of collective loss and collective hope. To every Chilean who suffered in some inconsolable way during this time, to be able to bury the former President was a way of vicariously burying their own affliction; proof the nightmare was really ending.

All of a sudden, in the midst of the clenched fists and slogans of the crowd, I had the dizzying sensation that time had stopped, that our goodbye at La Monede and our goodbye at the cemetery so many years later were contiguous, that nothing had happened in between.

The illusion soon dissipated.

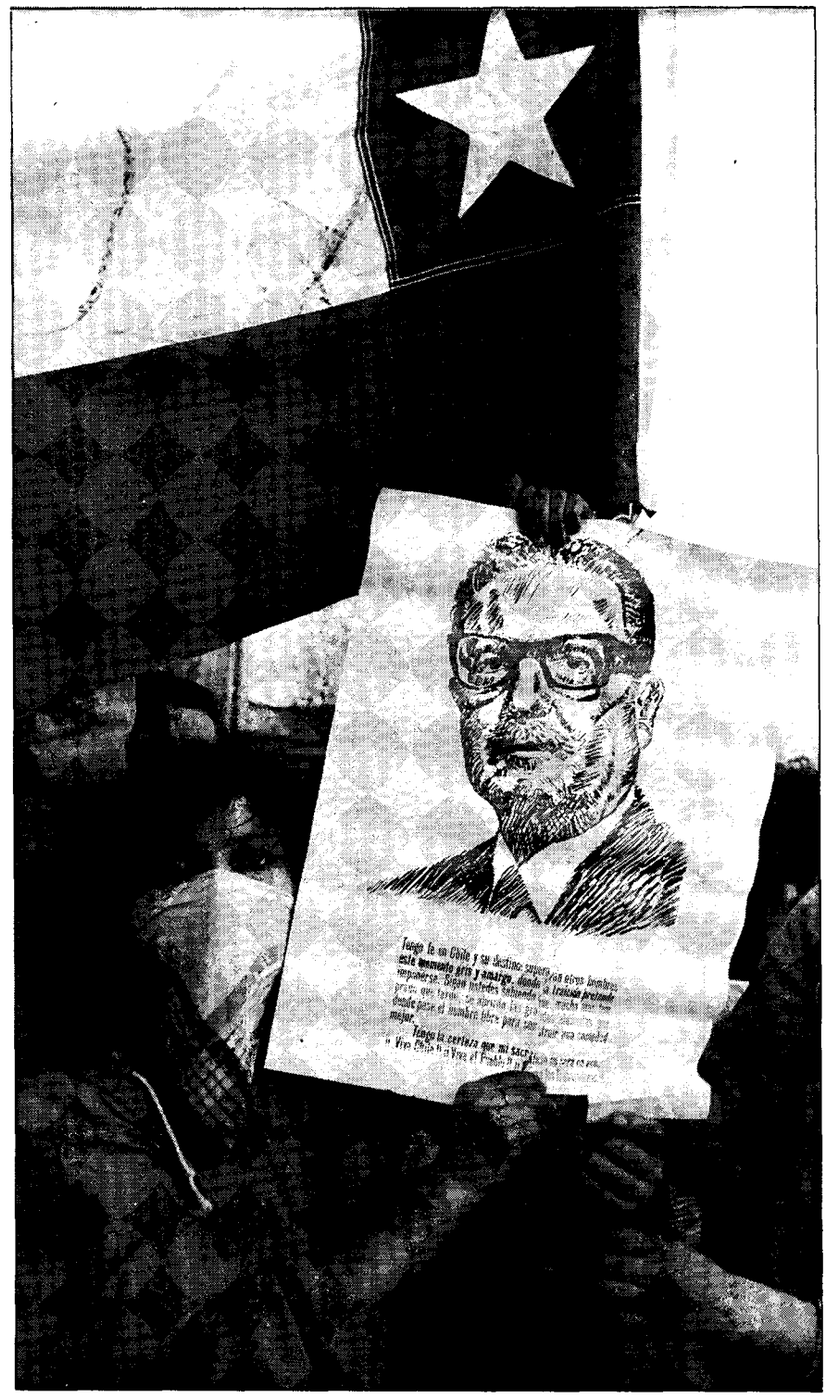
Time had indeed passed, in Chile and in the world. Not all was victory that day. If Pinochet had been unable to block Allende's funeral, Allende's followers had been unable to totally oust Pinochet from power. It is not merely the fact that the General is still Commander in Chief of the Army, that his designated cronies hold veto power in the Senate, in the Supreme Court, in the townships, obstructing popular sovereignty. Pinochet's policies have altered the way in which Chile dreams of itself and its future. Part of the vast, oppressed country that had elected Allende may stubbornly persist and emerge at solemn moments such as this one, but most Chileans have abandoned any thought of radically altering society, cheerfully expecting the western model of development and consumption to solve our problems.

It is because Allende's own socialists, like so many leftists around the world, have embraced the market economy that they can now govern with the Christian Democrats, their former rivals, accepting that the most they can hope for is a limited redistribution of services and income to the poorer sections of the country. This alliance—bringing together the progressive social forces whose division opened the way to military intervention—has given Chile's transition to democracy great stability and allows the dictatorship's legislation and influence to be gradually dismantled. But the word revolution is only pronounced now by the communists—once the Chilean left's most moderate and responsible party and now in utter disarray, ostracised both because of its failed policy of armed struggle and the worldwide breakdown of the bureaucratic socialist model.

If it is possible to chant with the crowds that this funeral was a resurrection of a man we refused to forget, it turned out to be simultaneously a real goodbye, an occasion in which one could measure how many of the ideas he believed in, how so many of his insurrectionary hopes, were receiving an authentic burial.

And yet, there are ways in which Allende could not be more our contemporary. None of the major problems to which he dedicated his existence has been resolved since his death: on the contrary, for the majority of Chileans, Latin Americans and third-world people in the past two decades, living standards, rather than getting better, have progressively deteriorated. We are, if anything, less independent than before, further behind, more vulnerable. The tasks of economic, technological and cultural autonomy that Allende proclaimed are as necessary today as they were yesterday—and they must, moreover, just as Allende reiterated ceaselessly, be achieved through democratic means, by making everyday people the protagonists of their own destiny. He would have been the first to point out that more capitalism as a remedy and solace for the ills that capitalism itself has mercilessly plagued us with for so many centuries cannot be the real answer to our dilemmas.

The tragedy is that, like that other experiment of those years that attempted to reconcile socialism with democracy, the Prague Spring of 1968, we never got the chance to explore an alternative. We were crushed, respectively, by the self-proclaimed world representatives of socialism and democracy, trapped by the fears of the cold war. In the Chilean case, even though Allende had personally condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he did not, and possibly could not, as I could not and did not along with most of the left, draw the deeper conclusions of that failure. We did not see the eastern European search as a mirror in which to learn. We were so much more democratic than our right-wing enemies that we thought it unnecessary to look deep into our own ambiguities and weaknesses.



Frank Spooner Pictures

Allende: for two decades a symbol of collective loss and collective hope—keeping his myth alive in 1983

To criticise those ideas, and many others, is to dare to begin a real conversation with Allende. Finally, that may be the most far-reaching consequence of the 4 September funeral. While Allende lay in an unmarked tomb, denied to us as the "desaparecidos" of Chile are still being denied to their relatives by the armed forces, we had to keep his myth alive —and one can receive consolation or inspiration from a myth but one cannot hold a dialogue with the man behind it.

Now that Salvador Allende, so dead and so alive, has been returned to the earth we set aside for him all these years, we can begin to live with him and without him, in a world that needs more than ever the social justice and the full participation he dreamt for all. ●

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The best years of their lives

Children's lives are bought cheaply in New York. The accidents and injuries they suffer cover a multitude of sins, argues Alexander Cockburn

Violence in New York has been sawing away at people's nerves all summer long. Each familiar zone of quotidian existence has its symbolic victim.

The subway: in early September a gang of young thugs set upon a family from Utah as they stood on a midtown platform at 10.30pm, knocking down father and slashing the wallet free from his back pocket, punching mother in the mouth, then stabbing their son to death as he tried to protect her.

The public phone booth: a businessman was gunned down by a dope-dealer, apparently for taking too long on his call. The home: bullets from these same machine pistols have smashed through tenement walls to kill infants in their beds.

As with other cities across America, the rent cheque for decades of gouged budgets, mangled social programmes, corporate malfeasance and political corruption is due and being paid in blood. The high-profile horrors get the headlines, but the true killer is what citizens have become deadened enough to call "accidents" or even "normalcy", accidents being normalcy raised to the level of drama.

On 4 August, the *New York Times* carried a photo-spread bearing the title, "Shrines to lives taken in violence". There were three short paragraphs of copy, the last of which read: "These memorials spring up across the city where people are taken suddenly—but all too routinely—in violent death. They silently counter the notion that life means little in neighbourhoods where crime is a constant. They mark, as well, an enduring human desire to fix in time the passing of a life, no matter how obscure, and to prevent it from being lost in memory." Thus did the *Times* venture into the dark heart of the ghetto and find, to its surprise, that people there too grieve when their dear ones die.

That any notice was paid to these memorials is explained by the particularly violent nature of this last summer. Between 22 July and 22 August, ten children were shot by what have been called "stray", or mistargeted, bullets. Five of them died. Some had been sleeping when gunfire came through the door or wall of their apartment, or through a car window. One was shot in the course of a robbery, another by people who were going for his father, another while she was

JoAnn Wypijewski

The memorial to Jenny and Evelyn, crushed to death while playing

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playing with her shadow on the sidewalk. Such attacks have become standard in the city, where homicides are up some 22 per cent from last year; it is just that they do not "normally" involve children.

The memorials pictured in the paper, graffiti messages on walls or sidewalks, with bunches of flowers and sometimes plastic crucifixes set before them, are reminiscent, though in cruder form, of a memorial on East 13th Street to two little girls who were killed on 1 July 1988, when the metal supports to the stoop they were playing on gave way, causing the stairs to collapse and two large marble columns and an ornate concrete lintel to crash upon them. The girls were 10 and 11 years old, Jenny Quiñones and Evelyn Leon. Their friend Christine Martínez, 12, survived but now walks with a limp.

When accounted for, deaths of children like Jenny and Evelyn are not placed in the category of "violence" but rather in the category of "accidents". Building inspectors do not check whether metal supports under concrete stairs are solid; neither do landlords. And even when they do check for dangerous housing conditions—faulty wiring, poor exit opportunities, peeling lead paint, rodents, lack of window guards—a citation does not necessarily mean the situation is corrected, as becomes clear from any trip to a housing court. Deaths from these sources do not make the news with the same regularity as do deaths from "violence", but, in fact, "accidents" are the largest single cause of death of New York children between the ages of one and 14. In 1987, the last year for which data are available, 17.6 per cent of the children who died were killed in accidents. Homicide was in fifth place, claiming 7 per cent.

The Times *ventures into the ghetto and finds, to its surprise, that people there too grieve when their dear ones die*

So the term "violence" should not be so narrowly interpreted. Looking at the 1987 figures, one can see the signature of economic violence. After accidents, the killers in order are malignant tumours, Aids, and congenital abnormalities. It is a known fact that poor children (like poor people in general) are more prone to cancers, that Aids in children usually means one of their parents is a junkie who uses dirty needles, and that congenital abnormalities can relate to prenatal care and the general environment in which the child was conceived.

The mortality rate is a useful guide here. Since the *infant* mortality rate in central Harlem is 22 per cent—equal to that of Romania, and higher than that of Chile, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Kuwait, Bulgaria, Poland, and, of course, Cuba—one can assume the *child* mortality rate will be similarly higher than it is in New York's fancier neighbourhoods.

The problem, however, comes in trying to quantify what one can confidently assume. Jenny and Evelyn lived in a working-class (though gentrifying) neighbourhood of New York on Manhattan's lower east side. The "accident" that killed them could perhaps not have been predicted, and the next day the landlord began construction to remove similar decoration from the building next door and to replace the staircase. But it was an old building in a row of old buildings where rents, except for newly "renovated" or "market value" apartments, are relatively low, and therefore services, including building improvements, limited. Yet there are no data on dangerous housing conditions as a factor in childhood death or injury.

Frederick Rivara, an expert on child injuries, says there has been no study done that separates out dangerous housing conditions as a cause of death in any statistical manner. But Rivara noted that injuries are the leading cause of death in children, accounting for "about one-half of the deaths of those under four years old, and more than one-half of the deaths of those ages five to 14".

Now, "injuries" designates a very broad category; the result of fires, car accidents, pedestrian accidents, poisoning, suffocation, drowning, falls, and so on. In New York, fires are the leading cause of death from unintended injuries to children aged one to four. More than one-third of children in this category have died in fires. This is followed by suffocation (20 per cent), falls (14 per cent), and pedestrian traffic injuries (10 per cent).

Plainly, buildings that burn are mostly not on Park Avenue; they are sent up in flames because of arson or faulty wiring or poor storage of combustible materials or unsafe heating methods tricked up by those who have had their heating turned off, or because of the careless actions of people who sleep in or conduct business in the hallways. Fire bells are usually the alarms of poverty.

In the *Times*'s photomontage, there was a shot of a memorial to the 87 people who died in the conflagration at the Happy Land Social Club in the Bronx in March. This came under the heading of "violence" rather than "accident" because its immediate cause was a desperate and crazed arsonist. It is also true, though, that the club had no windows, no means of escape, and that its owner had a long list of fire-code violations against him. So, in this instance, it was all a matter of timing.

Rivara says in an essay that, for the country as a whole, a "study of childhood and adolescent mortality [in 1982], demonstrated that there are large differences in mortality rates across different socioeconomic status levels and that the major difference is in traumatic deaths." An "analysis of childhood and adolescent deaths in Maine in 1976 to 1980 found that low-income children were 2.8 times more likely to die from an injury than higher income children...five times more likely to die from fire...Poor children live in more hazardous environments with higher fire risks, higher traffic density, and fewer satisfactory play areas. Children in these areas are more likely to use the streets as their playground because they lack suitable alternatives and they are less likely to be closely supervised."

The streets are their playgrounds

To return to the story of Jenny and Evelyn: at the time they were killed, they were playing ball, tossing it, according to the superintendent Jimmy Jones, between themselves and some friends across the street. As Rivara says, they were using the streets as their playground, so it would not be wildly speculative to say that on that day they also risked being killed by an oncoming car, the second leading cause of death for children of their age group in New York City.

And in the same way that they risked a traffic accident and the revellers at the Happy Land Social Club risked death by "accidental" fire, so at least two of the children shot this summer risked suffocation. Both were under four years, an age group for which suffocation is the second leading cause of "accidental" death. When they were shot (one is still alive), they were asleep in their apartments, one in bed with his grandmother, another on a couch with his sister. The most likely reason for such sleeping arrangements is overcrowding. It is well known that today in New York there are somewhere between 75,000 and 100,000 homeless people. The number of "near-homeless"—those who double up with their relatives—is less well known and even less precise, but can be safely put at about one million.

One final note. The mural in memory of Jenny and Evelyn now dominates a wall of a little playground across the street from where they lived. Back in 1988, this playground was an empty lot, its pavement cracked and horrible, broken glass everywhere, dog excrement, old refrigerators. It has now been reclaimed by the community and until recently was in sight of a banner proclaiming, "Drug dealers get out!" ●

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AN APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

Violence against women, including assault, genital mutilation, rape, battering, murder, infanticide and cruel neglect, is perhaps the most pervasive yet least recognised human rights issue in the world. It is also a profound health problem sapping women's physical and emotional vitality and undermining their confidence. These have spurred a group of women in Nigeria to develop a project aimed at women who are facing rising levels of sexual violence, physical assault, destitution and disease threats. Whether from traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, force feeding and childhood marriage; brutal abuse of wives and children; lack of shelter for homeless, elderly and destitute women; the widespread of AIDS amongst women.

Through peer counselling, education, information dissemination and community events the group helps both young and old women, providing direct services to the battered and homeless, and also working on public information campaigns to change attitudes towards violence against women.

Unfortunately, the group is meeting a fraction of the need that exists because of the escalating cost of running these services and lack of funds, but you can make a difference every time you give. Please join the group in this effort and invest in a future where the constant threat of violence no longer shadows women's lives. Send your donations by personal cheque, bank draft, International Money Order, or material gifts like clothing materials to:

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URGENT: LIBERIA

Now some women refugees and their children have arrived at our Centre from Liberia in a very serious condition. Five of them were raped (and one had a broken bottle put in her vagina) by the soldiers of Charles Taylor, because of their tribe. We cannot stand idly to see these women die of exposure, starvation and disease. We have been forced to ration food and we are having accommodation problems. Our anxiety to get more funds is growing so that we can meet our obligations to our women.

Please send donations by Registered Mail to: Women's Centre, Box 185, Eket, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

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LETTERS

Better letters

Your letters page is the weakest part of the *NSS*, whereas in other papers—the *Guardian*, for example—letters are often the best part. Yours are dull groans, so here's another: letters should be of general interest rather than some obscure quarrel in which the librarian insults the bishop in the local rag.

John Pitcher
Weymouth
Dorset

Democratic phoenix

The general thrust of Anthony Wright's "Out of Vision" article is very welcome. However, his statement that "Democratic socialism remains alive and well as a statement of values... much to the scorn of Marxists *through the ages*" (my emphasis), is hardly fair to the Social-Democratic Federation, which, after all, represented the "orthodox" Marxism of the Second International for a period of more than 30 years from the early 1880s onwards. An organisation that demanded (for instance) proportional representation, the initiative and referendum, and that defended the directly elected school boards and insisted that to attempt to get even Tory voters struck off the electoral register was "contrary to the principles of socialism" needs no retrospective lessons from us about democratic values.

Likewise, the (generally true) statement that "Labour, left to right, has been united in its resistance to constitutional troublemakers who wanted to tamper with the system of 'strong' government..." ignores how close the early Labour MP, Fred Jowett, and his supporters came to preventing the party simply accommodating itself to that system. They mounted serious efforts to persuade Labour to pursue a policy aimed at undermining the autocracy of the Cabinet and ministerial systems, in favour of a local-authority-like use of committees, and generally attempted to make a reality of "representative government".

Much of this has been forgotten—or even deliberately repressed. The point is not that we can return directly to these positions, but that the knowledge that concerns with democratic values and structures have been, at times, of greater significance in the past than is often now thought to have been the case, can only encourage us to take more seriously the possibilities of democratic renewal in the present and future.

Ian Bullock
Bonchurch Road
Brighton

French fried

I should have thought it was obvious "what Sean ffrench is for" (*NSS*, 7 September). To make me laugh, of course. Have you noticed that the less he writes about, the funnier he gets? This law has applied to all the diarists over the years.

In fact, the magazine steamed on the mat when dear old Arthur Marshall poked fun at all and sundry, particularly the staff and views of the *New Statesman* itself. Naturally, this state of affairs could not be tolerated for long, and he went out during a fierce shake-up that made Mrs Thatcher's change of ministers look very caring and benign.

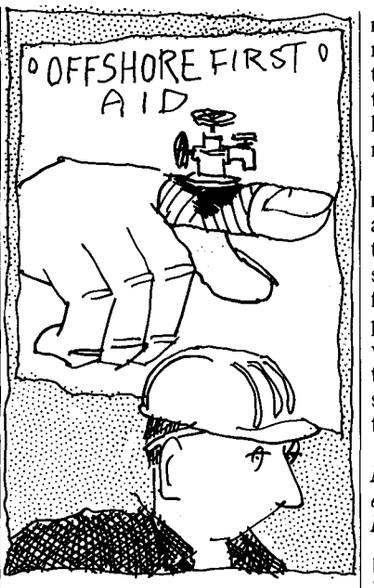
Mr French may have to watch this second law, namely the funnier you are, the more likely you are to be fired. Sean French rambling on about his baldness suits me fine. In fact I am secretly pleased about this news, since he is referred to by some in this house as "that yummy Sean French".

Chris Underhill
Frome
Somerset

Safety first?

Charles Woolfson's article on safety in the offshore industry (*NSS*, 7 September) is critical of the Department of Energy's record in policing safety. The spotlight turned on to departmental arrangements, and their dual responsibilities for both production and safety, has led them to make some organisational changes, including the setting-up of a new offshore petroleum safety division, which has at least been separated from the production side of the department's work.

The seriousness of the department's intentions, however, may perhaps be best judged by the requirements for the new post of head of the offshore petroleum safety division, which is being advertised at the moment (salary: up to £60,000 per year). These requirements do



not include any experience of the application of safety practices and techniques; nor experience in the offshore petroleum industry; nor even a degree in science or engineering or professional qualification.

Here, surely, is yet another example of the government creating an appearance of action rather than ensuring that a person is appointed who has the professional knowledge and experience to do the job that needs to be done.

Elizabeth Jenkins, national officer, IPMS (Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists)
London SE1

Selling sex: what price?

We read with interest Tim Robinson's timely article on male prostitutes and would fully agree with his comments on the diversity of men involved in prostitution and the importance of recognising, and responding to, the problems facing the homeless, whether or not involved in prostitution.

An issue not dealt with by Tim Robinson is the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV infection, by men who sell sex to other men. In London, a screening service aimed at these men has shown that 47 per cent of those screened, which included "rent-boys", escorts, masseurs and part-time sex workers, had evidence of an untreated STD. Our work in both Glasgow and London has revealed more homeless, street-based rent-boys of the "Allen" type than the articulate, entrepreneur "Gerry" type, and that this sub-group is the least likely to use conventional medical facilities.

We would stress therefore that *all* men involved in selling sex need appropriate medical services but that the "Allens" of this world, who form a substantial number of those at risk, face serious multiple problems—STDs, drug abuse, violence and homelessness—and that there is an urgent need for services to be developed to target these men more effectively.

Michael Bloor, Glasgow University, and David Tomlinson, St Mary's Hospital, London

Under wraps

Could you perhaps adopt the device that a Spanish magazine uses when its photo-journalism is too shocking for the faint-hearted to bear? They seal up the appropriate pages and allow the reader to avoid the ghastliness. Could you please seal up any article by R W Johnson so that my weekends aren't ruined by apoplexy.

Alfreda Benge
Louth
Lincolnshire

Dooh Lally

As the assistant keeper and deputy to Elspeth King at the People's Palace from 1975 until last week, I utterly refute Mr Lally's assertion that there has been any kind of policy of investment in social history.

The building, which Elspeth King and I inherited in 1975, was physically rundown and moribund. Ancient heating systems, antediluvian lighting, and Victorian display cases were the rule. It had no shop, café, publications, postcards or publicity materials. The upper floor was seriously affected by dry rot (it still is). The winter gardens, an integral part of the palace complex, were derelict, closed to the public pending possible demolition.

The Labour Party did not create the People's Palace—that honour belongs to Gladstone's Liberal Party—but by 1975 it had all but destroyed it through systematic neglect. The very name and ethos of the building had been erased: dubbed

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the "Old Glasgow Museum" by a hostile directorate, it had become the permanent poor relation of a department dominated by the market-driven kudos of the fine art salesroom.

It was on the personal initiative of Elspeth King and I that in 1975 the original name was restored. We also published a collecting policy for social history, the first of its kind in Scottish museums. The unstinting support for this policy from thousands of ordinary citizens resulted in the assembly of what has been described as "one of the finest urban collections in Europe".

As the products of each new area of collecting went on show, the response from the public was overwhelming, generating an avalanche of new acquisitions. It was this process of popular re-identification with a born-again People's Palace which gave rise to the fatal jealousy towards the institution and its curators so evident in Mr Lally's diatribe. The palace's independent, warts and all, critical approach to such taboo subjects as political history, religion, slavery and exploitation, were increasingly in conflict with the public relations' juggernaut of "Glasgow's Miles Better".

What Mr Lally and his SDA advisers required for Glasgow's reign as European City of Culture, was a sanitised self-congratulatory history, to underpin a new status quo utterly at odds with this city's radical past.

Michael Donnelly
West Princes Street
Glasgow

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● But the Latin/Greek battle is already lost. Medical students now are obliged to remember the names of illnesses and parts of the body from the noise the words make, not by knowing their roots. You will not be surprised to learn that a medical correspondent of the *Independent* last week wrote: "The bacteria is..." And if she is under the impression that *bacteria* is a singular word, one may wonder what else she believes.—*Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

● Equity general secretary Peter Plouviez said last night: "British Equity welcomes talented foreigners working in our country, even when they are required to play such an obviously British part as God."—*Today* (Katie Mallett)

FRINGE BENEFITS

Lead soldiers

Colin Ward

There's this old gent called Roy Lewis who, after 20 years in the *Times*'s foreign department and a further spell as African reporter for the *Economist*, retired and bought a Columbian press, a composing stick and several hundredweight of type. He called himself the Keepsake Press and began printing at least two dozen volumes of poetry and an endless series of "poem cards". All poets yearn for such a publisher.

But he also wrote a comic novel about prehistoric times called *What We Did to Father* (Hutchinson, 1960). It was seized upon by the science-fiction world as, in Brian Aldiss's words, "the most astute and funniest prehistorical fantasy ever written" and was given a new name by Penguin as *The Evolution Man*. A cult book in the sci-fi subculture, it has just re-emerged under that title from Corgi, and in French, with the title *Why We Ate Father*.

Anyone reading this history would find Mr Lewis an unusual character and would wonder about his relationship with Dad. I found the answer in a little book, from another private press in Cornwall, called *A Father's Imprint*.

Here he tells how he was, as a boy in Edgbaston, a real disappointment to his parents, never sticking at anything. Father was a schoolmaster turned business executive, whose high standards in everything ruined his aspirations, and made Mrs Lewis shake her head sadly over his intransigence. (Exactly like the prehistoric mother in *The Evolution Man*.)

But when Roy was 14, another boy brought an Adana printing press into the art class. "I experienced that blinding revelation known as religious conversion, totally and irrevocably, my soul enthralled, my eyes, ears and nose enslaved. I must print." He sold all his toys and sent his 45 shillings to Adana and found, like every amateur printer, that you need an awful lot of type to set up the smallest page. To do Father justice, he was impressed by this sudden passion and persuaded someone with a Monotype machine to punch out founts of Caslon Old Face.

What could he print of his own? "In truth, nothing. My thoughts, my ideas, my opinions were my father's. Inevitably, to me, poetry was something you studied at school. To write it was unthinkable... It meant exploring one's feelings, which was avoided in our house."

In the end, he sold his printshop for £5, worked for a university place, and spent a lifetime in journalism only to return to printing. And to writing novels. (The next to appear will be *The Reign of the Extraordinary King Ludd*.) He was co-author of *The English Middle Classes* and *Professional People*, and even had a new play at the Edinburgh Fringe last month.

His is the classic history of the boy who fell in love with printing, from Benjamin Franklin down to me, and consequently was *obliged* to become a writer. So I was delighted to meet his publisher at the bottom end of Cornwall. For Roy's childhood memoir is one of a series (and costs £5.95 from the Patten Press, Old Post Office, Newmill TR20 4XN). Others include Mervyn Levy's *Reflections in a Broken Mirror* at £10, and Frances Partridge's *The Pasque Flower, or the History of an Obsession* at £7.95, published to coincide with her third volume of diaries.

The publisher is Melissa Hardie and she has a range of other topics like Cornish memoirs and severely practical monographs on health management and research, aimed at professionals in health care. She presents an interesting merging of the traditional private-press limited edition and the newest computer-set desktop publishing.

But there is more to her than that. Down the garden at "The Hive", there is the Jamieson Library of Women's History, a collection of about 10,000 books, second only to the Fawcett Library in London, to which it is affiliated, and available to all. It covers women in relation to literature and the arts, the home, health care, the sciences, education and general biography.

For non-metropolitan scholars, and thanks to the Great Western Railway, Penzance has good links with the Midlands and the North. I rejoiced to find, in this Cornish idyll, not only a challenge to the urban bias in publishing, but a reminder that if we must pore over books, it can perfectly well be done in a garden full of doves.

They are there because one day her husband, Phil, was waiting for his train at Paddington and bought a copy of the *Amateur Woodworker*, caught by the headline "Build your own dovecote". He did, and they flourish, a tribute to the power of the printed word. A 17th-century amateur printer wrote triumphantly: "With twenty-six soldiers of lead I shall conquer the world." Well, they didn't quite, but in November Patten Press brings out Roy Lewis's *King Ludd*, which he describes as "an historical tease". Nice to find a publisher Luddite enough not to be owned by either Maxwell or Murdoch. Melissa is much more mellifluous.

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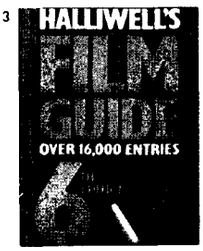

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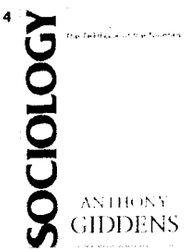

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Sandra Johnson/Katz pictures

Spike Lee has been criticised for refusing to denounce Farrakhan, slagged off for promoting Nike trainers and chided for being too middle class

You can't do the right thing all the time

Spike Lee brings controversy to the film world. Suzanne Moore on his latest attempt to muddy the waters

Spike Lee's last film, *Do The Right Thing*, ended with quotes from Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. The new Spike Lee Joint, **Mo' Better Blues**, ends with a quote from John Coltrane from *A Love Supreme*, as if to underline the fact that this is a very different kind of film. "I don't want to be thought of as a man who's only capable of making one kind of movie, and that's it," Lee explains.

Yet whatever kind of film Lee made, it would not be the right thing as far as some people are concerned. His unprecedented position as a black director whom Hollywood takes seriously also means that he is under enormous pressure to be all things to all men. Since *Do The Right Thing*, he has been accused of heightening racial tensions at a very difficult time. He has been criticised for refusing to denounce Farrakhan, slagged off for promoting Nike trainers and chided for being too middle class. None of this is helped by the fact that Lee himself obviously takes great pleasure in stirring it. He is a brilliant self-publicist, and public feuds like the one with Eddie Murphy only add to his bolshie image.

Mo' Better Blues, although superficially a far mellower film than *Do The Right Thing*, is already the subject of controversy in the US, where it has been accused of being anti-Semitic in articles in the *New York Times*, the *New York Post* and the *Village Voice*. A recent piece in the *Voice* was accompanied by a blank space instead of the usual film still. The caption read, "The reason that this space is blank is that the Spike Lee organisation refused to allow the use of a photograph of the two greedy Jewish club owners in *Mo' Better Blues* to illustrate this column." This one looks like it will run and run...

In the meantime we have the film. Neither the masterpiece nor the failure that some have suggested, it is too loose, too long (as was *Do The Right Thing*), but still has enough verve to hold the whole thing together. Denzel Washington, whom Lee correctly identifies as having "matinée idol" potential, plays Bleek Gillaim, a young jazz trumpeter dedicated to his craft. Indeed, this dedication overrides everything, even his relationships with women and with the members of his band. Nothing or no one will come between him and his horn.

Lee artfully sets up several jazz myths only to have them destroyed by the end of the movie. Bleek's self-absorption is, after all, part of the whole macho musician trip that routinely excuses selfishness as genius. Both the women in Bleek's life—Indigo, a sensible teacher (Joie Lee), and Clarke (Cynda Williams), an aspiring singer—put up with this for a while. They know about each other but, on confronting Bleek, he can only come up with the smugly pathetic reason, "It's a dick thing." He is in the enviable position of having his cake and eating it.

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It's the same with the other members of the band whom he refuses to listen to. While the other musicians are getting pissed off with playing to packed houses while making little money, Bleek ignores them. The only person he seems to have any time for is his childhood friend Giant, played by Lee himself, who is steadily gambling himself into real trouble.

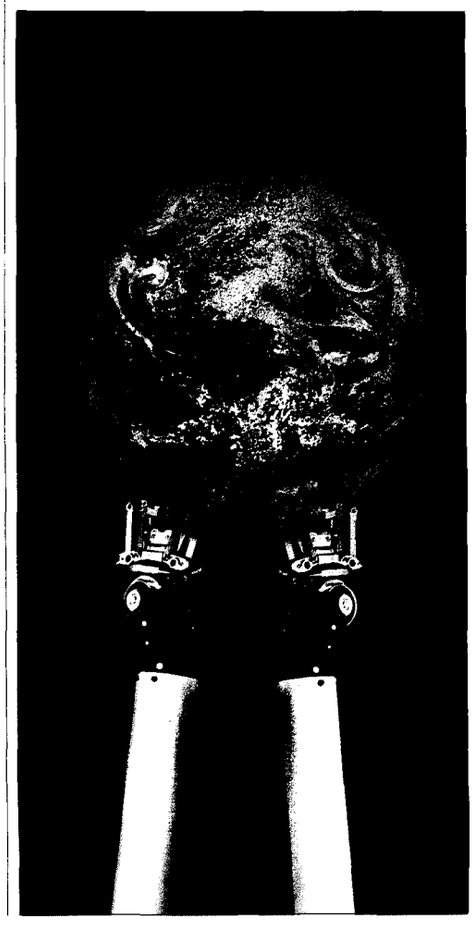
The film has a timeless feel, a mix of bebop fashion and VDUs, pork-pie hats and portable phones. Its lush score underlines the lifestyle of the musicians, which appears to be far from struggling. They live in enormously stylish apartments and dress to kill. But Giant's gambling leads to Bleek's downfall. At the same time, Indigo and Clarke decide they have had enough and leave him. And Bleek is left alone to realise the error of his ways. After the purposeful ambiguity of *Do The Right Thing, Mo' Better Blues* is an enormously moral and romantic film as Bleek learns painfully that love conquers all, its final scenes telescoping love, marriage and childbirth as the answer to Bleek's problems.

Along the way though, there are the now familiar Lee trademarks and themes: an episodic structure, wonderful improvised sequences with magnetic performances, interspersed with less successful scenes which drag on way too long; a brilliant score composed by Bill Lee, Spike's jazz-composer father, and Branford Marsalis. Bubbling just below the surface are the usual racial conflicts—one of the musicians has a white, rich-bitch girlfriend whom the other members of the band laugh at. And Bleek himself has to choose between the dark-skinned Indigo and the light-skinned Clarke.

But it is the portrayal of the two Jewish clubowners—the Flatbush brothers—who own the club in which Bleek's band plays that has caused so much offence. Undoubtedly caricatures of money-grabbing Jews, the other characters in the film are treated with far more respect. "What they say, the way they speak, their body gestures, the *gelt* in their eyes, make for quintessentially crude anti-Semitism. It's the kind you see on the walls of toilets," writes Nat Hentoff. Certainly there are no other Jewish characters to offset them.

Lee denies he is an anti-Semite, but points out that many black musicians were ripped off by white businessmen over the years. What Lee has tried to do is to make a black jazz film, to reclaim jazz as as a specific part of black heritage. This is important. After all, the last big jazz film, *Bird*, was made by a very white, white man, Clint Eastwood. Eastwood, whatever his liberal intentions at the time, gave many interviews in which he talked about jazz being one of the few authentic *American* (rather than black) cultural forms.

Lee's love of jazz is certainly up there on the screen and hard to resist. But whether that compensates for his use of stereotypes and the ending of the film, which is as glowing an endorsement of family values as you will see this year on screen, is quite another thing. So is it the wrong thing? I don't think Lee has it in him to make a movie that is not complex, thought-provoking and irritating all at the same time. Films that demand to be struggled with sound pretty much like the right thing to me.



Photography

Global warnings

A blind eye is being turned on the world, says Janet Abrams

In the early days of the Gulf crisis, Peter Snow of *Newsnight* left his customary desk and moved to battle stations: standing, with an Admiral, behind a horizontal relief map of the conflict zone, whose crude modelling testified to hasty construction in the BBC workshops.

While television graphics can now provide such information far more effectively and elegantly on the plane of the screen, *Newsnight*'s return to the three-dimensional "chunk of the earth" style of representation had a rhetorical significance. It drew on our memories of war command centres—real and cinematic—where terse-faced army personnel plotted the progress of battle on gigantic maps, using long rods to manoeuvre the icons of strategic hardware.

As the events in the Arab peninsula grew more grave, the *Independent* moved its Macintosh-designed daily crisis map from an inside page to the front, taking advantage of the computer's graphics facility to give an annotated visual bulletin of the events.

For those who would previously have struggled to pick out Kuwait on a revolving classroom globe, these maps served to re-orient attention to a part of the world commonly perceived in the west—as Edward Said pointed out on the BBC's *Late Show*—via stock footage of camels, sand dunes, petrochemical plants and traditional robes. By imposing "modern" cartographic techniques on an unfamiliar culture, we have the reassuring illusion of being brought closer to this foreign place, and also, to some extent, of controlling it.

The use of maps in wartime and issues of cultural stereotyping surface in **The Globe: Representing The World** (Photographers' Gallery, 5 & 8 Great Newport Street, London WC2 until 13 October). I use "surface" advisedly, since these themes are merely implied by the images on display, critical commentary being reserved for the catalogue essays. Other sections are devoted to Brazilian deforestation, NASA and satellite views from space, the biases of cartography, and images which incorporate the globe as a symbol of commercial or political prowess.

Talking of surface, the NASA shots have a surprising capacity to stir, despite their overexposure in the media—Harrison Schmitt's 1972 photo of the earth from 23,000 miles is the most frequently requested image from the NASA library. How far away, how alone, "sitting in a tin can", were those guys, so far beyond the earth that the egg-white cloud thickness we

New perspectives on the globe: "Chattels" by Boyd Webb, above left, and, left, photomontage by Peter Kennard

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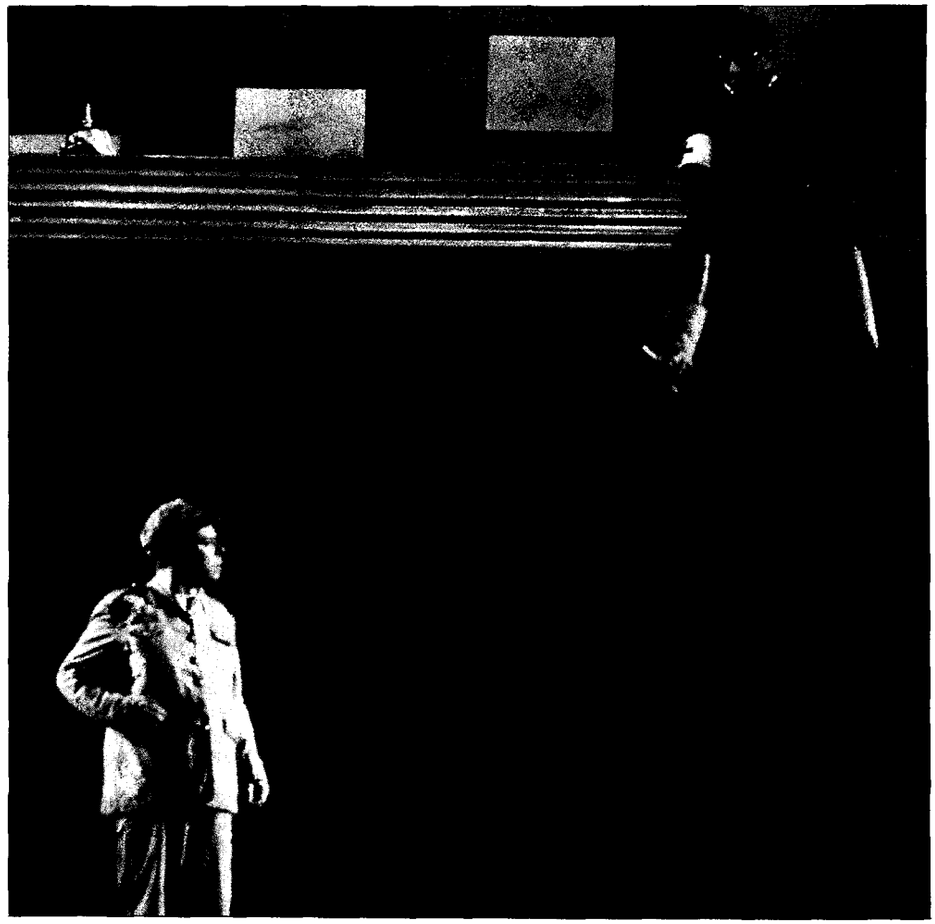
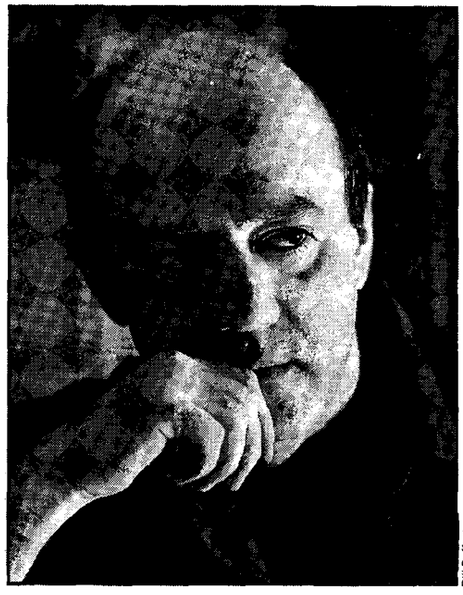
climb through on jet planes looks like mere sugar-icing swirls. Conversely, you realise the immense scale of climatic systems. The wall texts claim such photographs, and satellite images of the ozone hole, as triggers for the current green consciousness. But the question remains as to why they took quite so many years to penetrate the collective imagination in this particular way. The section on mass media images—advertisements, magazine covers, corporate logos—partly answers this: the globe has become such an easily appropriated symbol that its meaning has worn thin, claimed equally by cigarette manufacturers and ecologists to represent commercial conquest or threat.

The recent Benetton ads are just the latest example of "expeditionary" photography. This genre was already well established by the turn of the century when firms showed "natives" using their products in far-off, conspicuously foreign contexts, and drew parallels between their own commercial efforts to go "to the ends of the earth" and those of heroic mountaineers and Arctic explorers.

Oliviero Toscani's cross-cultural portraits are juxtaposed against early 20th-century photos of the Bororo Indians. Benetton's strategy is to show all peoples of the world—preferably those of "opposing" ethnicities—apparently brought into harmony by their adoption of a mass-produced uniform. Already parodied by artists like Gran Fury in New York, these adverts offer a trite view of the social fabric seething invisibly below the NASA clouds, turning a blind corporate eye on the world.



Bill Rafferty



Bill Rafferty

Stefanos Lazaridis's (left) stage set for the new ENO production "Wozzeck" at the Coliseum

Profile

Shoebox shuffle

Andy Lavender talks to stage designer Stefanos Lazaridis

Newly sharpened, the designer's pencil is one of the seemingly indispensable instruments that fashion a modern piece of theatre or opera. This marks a return to a visual swagger more common in European theatre towards the start of this century. No longer is the set a prostrate backdrop or—worse—a glammy eyesore. In some places, at least, set design is again vivid and articulate. These tendencies are displayed with peacock brilliance in the work of **Stefanos Lazaridis**, who has designed two major shows in London.

Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, at the Coliseum, is the first new production in English National Opera's risk-taking season of 20th-century work. Adapted from Buchner's play, it tells of a young barber, ground down by various forms of oppression, who murders his wife in a fit of futile jealousy. At the Barbican, meanwhile, the Royal Shakespeare Company presents *Moscow Gold*, written by Howard Brenton and Tariq Ali, the authors of *Iranian Nights*. This latest venture is an enormous undertaking, focusing on Mikhail Gorbachev, casting an eye over Soviet history since 1917, and raking through recent events in the Union.

His designs are ostentatious. He gobbles up space, right up the vertical axis of a stage, so that the show exists literally on different levels

Lazaridis's contribution to both shows is significant. He is best known for his work with ENO, where he has forged a sparky partnership with artistic director David Pountney. His designs are ostentatious. He gobbles up space, right up the vertical axis of a stage, so that the show exists literally on different levels. He uses colour as an emblem. He is fond of simplicity—a prop here, a banner there—but his sets are also dramatic and insistent. He has a reputation for being difficult and demanding. He drags on a Gîtanes, looks across with deep, innocent doe-eyes, and promises a world of visual stimulation in *Moscow Gold*.

"It's epic theatre on a big scale. There are references to Meyerhold and his vocabulary of formalist theatre and Russian expressionism. It also has the feeling of circus, and it almost goes into puppet theatre at some points. All the baddies are big, for instance—some of them are 12 feet high—while Erich Honecker is a shrinking man in a huge coat that trails for three feet. So he's a spectacle, although what he says is very serious and very awful. The whole thing, I hope, will come across as if it has a light touch, full of witty ideas, with bold strokes."

The central item of set, specified in the stage

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directions, is a huge table, which seats the Politburo, but which is also a stage itself, with characters ascending from traps. One of Lazaridis's bold strokes has been to feature a huge statue towering over the table, with only the legs and a pointing finger visible. It is a statement, both comic and serious: Stalin the icon, beneath whose boots the Union squirms. "Of course," says Lazaridis, "the statue does crash down when *perestroika* happens."

His ability is to make a set poetic: not just visually striking, but intellectually and emotionally evocative. Even so, he treads fine lines between chic aesthetics and political intervention. There is a moment in *Moscow Gold* when the stage direction requests that "the Berlin Wall flies in". Lazaridis describes his solution.

"You see a grey piece of scenery, very long, about eight feet high, with lamps on top. On it are painted the chalk outlines of dead bodies, like police outlines at a shooting. It's just these bodies, lying horizontal, so it's open to people to respond to that image rather than saying, 'this is a fragment of the Berlin Wall.' Then the whole cast start pushing their fingers through, they tear it and we find out that it's paper—which is what, after all, it proved to be; this terrifying piece of paper. When they come through they're all wearing white overalls, with the graffiti of the Berlin Wall painted on them. So again I think it is a circus sort of idea, but also a very serious image. Eventually they take the overalls off and are left, some of them naked, some of them in their underwear, just real people. End of Act One."

Lazaridis's design for *Wozzeck* involves a huge wall of corrugated iron across the front of the stage, parts of which slide open to reveal different boxes within. "Basically I want the set to represent a desperate and relentless monotony," he explains. "Wherever you go, you're still in the same place. The piece is like the reportage of the story of a crime. The evidence comes one bit after another, so in the set you close off shutters and frame the area that you want, so that it's almost like a collage. The same idea is in the music, in the way it fragments, and in its atonality."

This shoebox shuffle is broken by splashes of colour, some vicious caricatures from the performers, and by scenes that explode the sense of dour conformity. Lazaridis and Pountney quote the German painters George Grosz and Otto Dix, with performers caught in postures of seedy revelling, swigging from bottles or indulging in oral sex. The murder scene is likewise a sophisticated treat, featuring a diagonal sheet of corrugated plastic, a mirrored floor, a dirty, bloody moon, slime-green light and the appearance of drowned bodies, rising and falling as if underwater. It works extravagantly well.

Is there a danger, with such intrusive displays of imagination, that the set threatens to swamp the whole show? "Absolutely," Lazaridis agrees, with a surprising eagerness. "I feel that the set of *Wozzeck* is perhaps too big." Too late to change it now. And better anyway, you feel, to err on the side of ambition.

Wozzeck *plays at the London Coliseum until 25 October.*
Moscow Gold *opens at the Barbican on 26 September.*

Deee-Lite: positivity movement storms the charts

Music

E is for ecstasy

Simon Reynolds discovers music to find yourself in

A few years ago a new word entered the pop lexicon: "positivity". Its first noteworthy appearance was in 1988, as the title of a track on Prince's *Lovesexy* album. Prince heralded the coming of "a new power generation" united in a vague creed of "positive power". Nobody paid much attention, as Prince's career was, commercially, in the doldrums. But, by the summer of 1989, "positivity" had become a buzzword, thanks to the massive success of Soul II Soul, the emergence of a new, mellow sound and ethos in rap and the infiltration of New Age ideas into the house scene.

Eighties pop was probably too confused to have a *Zeitgeist* as such, but if anything caught the decade's tone it was rap. Rap's hardcore mindset was solipsistic and paranoid: the fortress mentality of the survivalist, looking out for Number One in the race of a disintegrating social fabric. But since the consensus is that it's unseemly for a new decade not to differ from the preceding one, last year speculation began about what would be "the spirit of the nineties". Pundits predicted a return to caring and sharing, an emphasis on "quality of life" rather than standard of living, a return to nature and a new green consciousness. Before long, pop began to articulate this nineties *Zeitgeist*-in-chrysalis.

All of a sudden, the gangster postures of rappers like Niggers with Attitude, or the brash upwards aspiration of Bobby Brown, began to look dated. Suddenly, nobody wanted to be "nasty" (US black slang for cool or sharp) anymore, they wanted to belong, to bond. There was a dramatic shift in sensibility: from "I" to "we", from materialism to idealism, from "attitude" to platitude.

It was the British group Soul II Soul who captured and defined the new mood. Their two UK number ones of last year, "Back to Life" and "Get A Life", were flagships of the Soul II Soul philosophy: a belief in self-realisation through positive thinking, club culture as a multiracial melting pot, and a kind of caring, community-nurturing entrepreneurialism. "Get a Life" took an American put-down normally addressed to losers, and gave it a New Age twist. Soul II Soul's mastermind, Jazzie B, clearly intended to be a "positive role model", and was recognised as such by the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, when he became the first British recipient of an award in the organisation's history.

This year's follow-up to Soul II Soul's debut album was even more sententiously "uplifting" in tone. The title, *1990: A New Decade*, attempted to capture the new sense of anticipation, a fresh start for the people of the world. Even more than its predecessor, *1990: A New Decade* was laden with platitudinous slogans. Nonetheless, in Soul II Soul's wake, the debate in club music has shifted decisively from "sweet nothings" to the "motivational". All manner of Brit soul has-beens have jumped aboard the positivity bandwagon: David Grant's "Life 90" or Loose Ends, whose "Don't Be A Fool" is a veritable compendium of asinine advice ("Try and you will progress", "Take one day at a time", "Don't waste your life away").

At the same time, the Soul II Soul beat—an ambling, mellow groove midway between funk and reggae—now underwrites the majority of dance hits of the day, whether directly sampled (by indie crossover groups like Primal Scream) or imitated (The Chimes). The Soul II Soul rhythm is New Age "good vibes" incarnate.

Another factor behind the hegemony of positivity has been the consolidation of the UK's "rave culture". Somewhere between the Second Summer of Love and the Third (this year), acid house's sensibility has subtly shifted from music to "lose yourself in" to music to "find yourself in". Ecstasy was originally intended as a tool in clinical psychotherapy: its advocates claimed that three E trips was equivalent to three years in analysis. If the subculture use of E was initially a means of getting brain-blasted, it didn't take long for the scene's ideologies to formulate a vision of E as consciousness-raising. E promotes tactile intimacy and garrulous communication; at huge "raves", the effect is one of mass communion. E has been eulogised as the great leveller, encouraging fraternisation across race and class lines, transforming soccer hooligans into "love thugs". Almost inevitably, the rave scene has become a fertile climate for the proliferation of New Age ideas, mysticism, even magic and ritual.

These currents started to make themselves felt in the music from the middle of last year. S Xpress astutely shifted from the camp, tacky disco of "Superfly Guy" towards the New Age transcendentalism of "Mantra for a State of Mind": "music to cleanse your mind". Tracks

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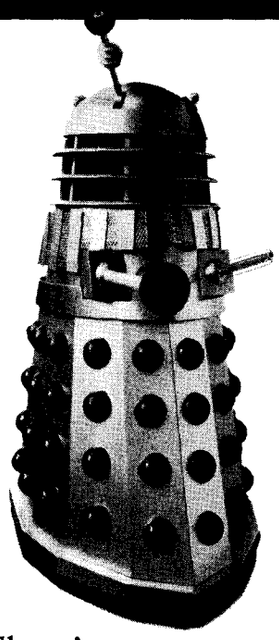
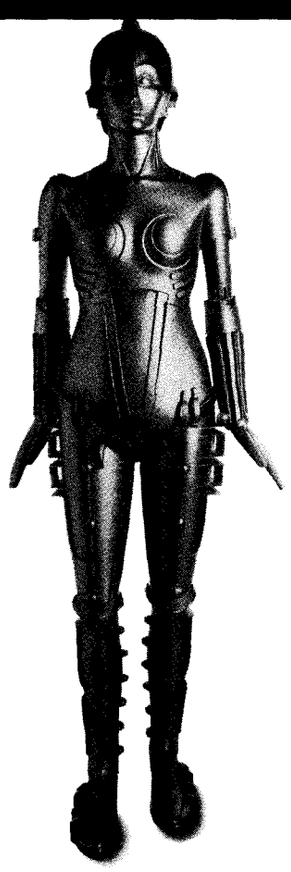
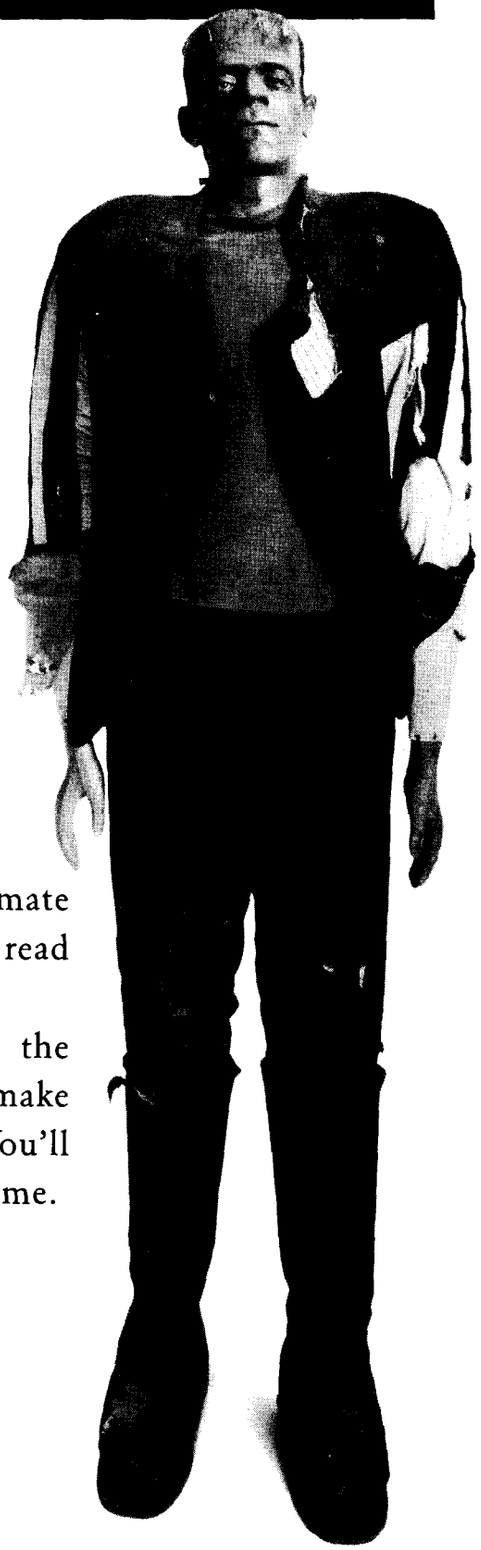
THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF FILM AND TELEVISION.







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Soul II Soul's Jazzie B: "Positive" role model

like 808 State's "Pacific", Innocence's "Natural Thing" and The Grid's "Flotation" introduced an almost pastoral mood to house music. People began to talk about "New Age House" and "Ambient House". Some clubs even provided special rooms where you could mellow out to a soundtrack of beat-free ambient and New Age music. Ravers began to abandon Ecstasy in favour of "organic highs" engendered by substances like gurano (Amazonian tree bark), royal jelly, ginseng, or concentrated vitamin elixirs.

Manchester, now widely regarded as the UK's new pop capital, has been a source of "positive vibes" in the past year. For all the hyperbole and hyperactivity, this "movement" has suffered from the lack of a clearcut ideology for people to latch on to. But scene leaders The Stone Roses have come closest to articulating the Manchester stance. They've talked of their hatred for "the tense bastards who fuck things up for everybody else", the eighties spirit of go-for-it ambition.

The Manchester scene's laidback aura is crystallised in the slang term of approbation, "baggy", in the loose-fitting clothes, the loose-limbed dancing, and the use of Ecstasy and "draw" (dope). The Stone Roses's latest single, "One Love", attempted to crystallise the new *Zeitgeist*: like "Come Together" by Primal Scream, "One Love" could be construed as either a love song or an anthem of the new sense of communion.

The culmination of the new positivity pervading dancefloor culture is the New York group Deee-Lite (currently charting with "Groove is in the Heart"). Deee-Lite's album title, *World Clique*, articulates a vision of dance music as a force of integration that's worlds apart from the traditional élitism associated with club culture in the eighties. With Deee-Lite, the positivity movement has reached hyper-consciousness and saturation point. The exhortations to "Smile On" are starting to grate.

The creed of "positivity" draws on diverse sources: the discourse of US self-realisation and interpersonal therapy; New Age notions of "healing music" and "abundance consciousness"; the new ecological awareness; flower-power imagery; even gospel, via "deep house" (a more soulful variant of house). It's easy to mock the positivity peddlers for the nebulous *naïveté* of their vision of "a new dawn rising", but clearly the new feeling of "something in the air" stems from a genuinely deep-seated, if poorly grounded, idealism and hunger for change.

Fiction

Novel impressions

Lucasta Miller believes the novel has outworn its 19th-century origins

Now it's **Booker Prize** time again, some cynics might see the recent proliferation of such prizes as an artificial attempt to generate interest in an art form that is heading towards its sell-by date. Of course, publishers keep publishing novels, the public keeps buying them, and reviewers keep reviewing. But when biographer Michael Holroyd reportedly predicts the death of the novel and the rise of the biography as the genre of the 21st century, we might be tempted to peel back the extravagant self-interest of the sentiment to see whether there is anything in it.

My own experience of contemporary novels has snowballed since I recently crawled out from under the footnotes of academic literary criticism. And the arbitrary syllabus compiled for me by literary editors has perhaps enabled me to form a more representative impression of the sort of novel that is around at the moment than I would have got if I'd been given the freedom to pick out the best.

On the evidence of this random selection, there do seem to be some recognisable tendencies in present-day novel-writing that might explain the attraction not only of biography—the personal history—but also of travel writing—the personal geography. Why are so many young writers more interested in travelling than in sitting at home biting their nails over their first novel? What's going on when Peter Ackroyd sticks a load of novelistic conversations into his new biography of Dickens?

The recognisable tendency I'm talking about can be called, for want of a better name, post-structuralist chic. I'm not suggesting that your average novelist has been tying him or herself up in deconstructive knots on Derrida's side of the comprehensibility divide. But you can detect a hint, if watered down, of a shared *mentalité*, discourse, or whatever you like to call it.

Borges and Eco make brilliant, creative use of their philosophical anxieties about semiotics. I'm not talking about them. What I am talking about is a sense of embarrassment that you find in a lot of contemporary novelists when it comes to fleshing out their characters into three-dimensional personalities with internal psychologies engaged in plausible human relationships that reflect experience. Despite modernism, most novels still have characters and plots, dialogue and description. But an oversophisticated fear seems to keep many authors at an arch, ironic distance from their characters, as if there were something vulgar or immature in abandoning oneself to the pretence that they are real people. Character, a post-structuralist might tell you, is etymologically related to the idea of signs and letters. It reveals itself to be a mere verbal construct. But no one ever felt compassion for a verbal construct.

If authors are happy to detach themselves from their characters, so that the narrative can embrace murder, incest, madness or rape, without so much as raising its voice, it's because they're restrained by stylistic self-consciousnesss and by a moral coyness, which both seem to relate, if obliquely, to this post-structuralist thing. Relativism, once it's trickled down through the pen of a thoughtless novelist, can become just an excuse for not really bothering to confront moral issues at all—for fear of appearing the naïve moralist, too stupid to be sceptical.

Hand-in-hand with such moral wimpishness is a sort of self-conscious style that inhibits content. This is the average novelist's version of the *il n'y a pas de hors-texte*, the primacy of the signifier, or what have you. They never forget they're writing a novel; you never forget you're reading one. The style is tricksy, brittle, and full of abortive pregnant pauses. There's a lot of overstated understatement and over-artful simplicity. Each sentence is beautifully crafted, but the result is often a collection of crystalline fragments with little overall integrity.

Some novelists seem more like technicians than like people bursting with something to communicate about human experience. Perhaps it's not the indirect influence of French philosophers so much as the style-conscious eighties that have brought us the designer novel. Ironically, considering her given role as the queen of the philistines, this is an aesthetic Mrs Thatcher seems to share. According to an art historian who showed her around a recent exhibition of Old Masters, the one comment she believed to be infallible, and which did its duty in front of almost every other picture, was that it was the style that mattered in art.

Each sentence is beautifully crafted, but the result is often a collection of crystalline fragments with little overall integrity

If many novels seem to be too sophisticated to commit themselves to straightforward, penetrating realism, somehow feeling that the novel has "outgrown" its 19th-century innocence, then the attraction of biography and travel writing—which deal uncompromisingly with real people and real experience—is not surprising. Perhaps they offer a route back into a warmer, less sceptical, more humane kind of writing.

A S Byatt's *Possession* is on the Booker shortlist, and it sticks pretty much within the realist conventions. The fact that it roots itself in the 19th century doesn't only allude to the age of classic realism. It also—since its present-day protagonists are involved in the (literal) unearthing of the literary biographies of their Victorian counterparts—suggests that the novel needs to be sustained by biography if our craving for a new realism is to be satisfied.

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Art

Moving the goalpost

Louisa Buck sees our cities coming alive with art

At the top of Mount Edgcumbe Park overlooking Plymouth Hoe, a multitude of red and green lights intermittently flashes across the hillside. Neither a naval installation nor a tourist funfair, this mysterious blinking presence is Ron Haselden's contribution to the **Four Cities Project**.

The TSWA *Four Cities Project* brings 22 new works by an international line-up of artists to Londonderry, Glasgow, Newcastle and Plymouth until the end of October. Locations range from an airport to a Roman Catholic boys' school, and materials used include soot, laser beams, gold-leaf, granite and the body parts of Action Man.

The bronze turd-in-a-plaza is therefore not on the agenda at these exhibitions. Instead, both the location and the artwork are accorded equal importance: one of the few stipulations to all artists submitting work was that their proposals had to "relate specifically to the characteristics of a site—formal, environmental, cultural and historical". With TSWA's (the initial sponsor was Television South West) commissioning budget alone in excess of £300,000, the artists have, for once, been able to be site-specific on a grand scale.

Stefan Gec: "Trace Elements", Newcastle quayside

But it is not just that many of the TSWA artworks are unorthodox and ambitious. Even before the project's grand opening, the debates that it has generated in each of its host cities have confirmed a new phase in the dialogue surrounding public art. Can art function in a public place? Can a place ever be public? Can strangers come into a city and make statements about a particular site? Who represents the community? Is there even such a thing as community? These questions have always been implicit in public art, but never in this country have they been given such a vigorous airing.

"I still think art is propositional, art is not about democracy," declared American artist Dennis Adams during an animated discussion with the citizens of Londonderry two weeks ago. "You make a temporary work of art, you make a statement and have people respond to it. Some will hate it, some not—I think too much foreplay is a deadly thing." In front of Londonderry city walls overlooking Bogside, Adams has erected a Gaelic football goalpost that acts as a frame for a billboard-sized photograph of the Rossville flats that once dominated the view. The surrounding lookout posts and

WOMEN'S THEATRE GROUP

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by Lisa Evans

Researched with Amnesty International.

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surveillance cameras load the mesh of the goal net with meaning. Yet it is not this piece that has attracted controversy.

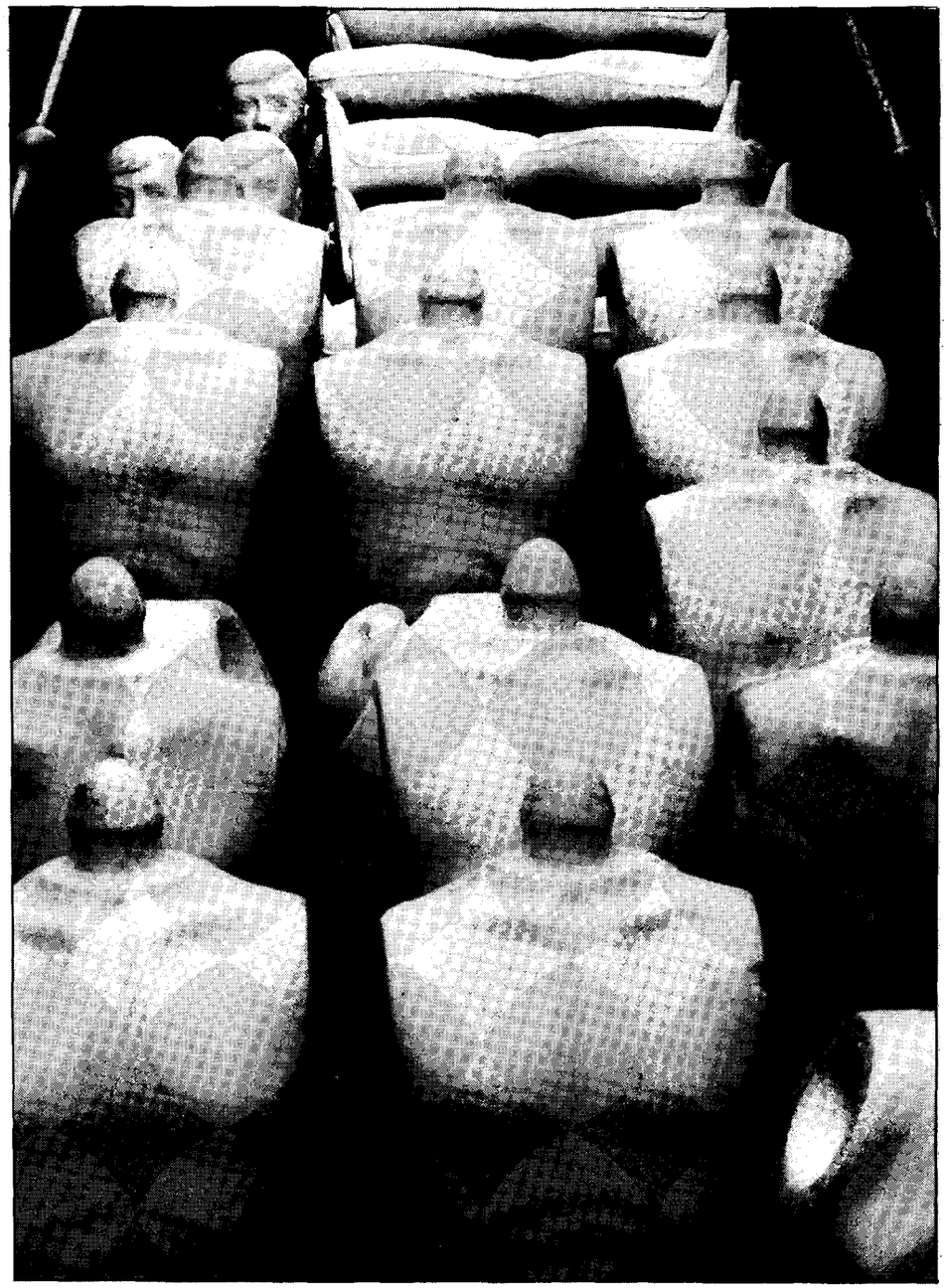
Fellow American Nancy Spero has played off the strong mural tradition in Londonderry by printing images of women and fragments of poetry directly on to the wall of a Bogside community centre. Compared to nearby images of masked paramilitaries and flaming griffins, they appear inconspicuous and almost insipid. Not so for the local people. In the words of one Londonderry woman, "It was a real stunner to me that somebody from the outside could just come in and use a wall that is the only place for the community to put 'messages'." Spero's hope was that the brief appearance of her work in such a site would touch a universal chord that could transcend location and "be of interest by opening women's issues and community issues through the images of women". But, in the face of local resentment, she offered the ultimate concession: "If it's that bothersome to the community then you should paint it over—but document it first please, it was a tough job!" So far, the mural has remained untouched.

In a city as laden with cultural symbols as Londonderry, where it is difficult for art to function on any level, it is the temporary nature of these works that enables them to act as lightning rods for debate. But, throughout the four cities, whether in conspicuous or obscure sites, all the TSWA pieces demonstrate that a public work of art does not need to be permanent in order to engage with its surroundings.

Temporary need not mean disposable: Czech artist Magdalena Jetelova's transformation of an underground air-raid shelter in Plymouth does more than provide a dramatic environment with soot-lined walls, charred wooden seats and a red wandering laser beam. Its disquieting connotations of surveillance and all-pervading technology in the context of the navy-occupied city will extend beyond the work's two-month lifespan. As will Stuart Brisley's ironic monument to the heroic male worker in Glasgow's derelict Govan Graving docks, where the scaled-up body parts of 12 Action Men lie scattered around a vast basin, as ephemeral as the industrial landscape that surrounds them.

Yet TSWA also reveals that the polemical bias of such public artworks need not deny their aesthetic impact: the two elements can function in tandem. In Glasgow, English artists Kevin Rhowbotham and Janette Emery have gilded one of the Ionic pillars on the façade of the burnt-out Caledonia Road church in the Gorbals. The stunning simplicity of this golden column, which shines out across the decimated area like a gold filling in a blackened mouth, unites questions of value—the heroic in architecture and the marketing of heritage—and charges them all with a transcendent beauty. Likewise, the eight steel bells cast from the bodies of eight scrapped Soviet submarines by Newcastle artist Stefan Gec, which hang and chime like rusty buoys over the River Tyne, have a poetry about them that enhances their political message.

In the arena of public art, the political message from those who control these public spaces is equally revealing. Plymouth city council gave no reason for insisting that black British artist Donald Rodney substitute red liquid for his own blood in a work that updates and reassesses Plymouth's history of slave trading; and the same council also inexplicably blocked a lightbox by Canadian artist Geneviève Cadieux, which was to look with a giant eye out to sea from Plymouth Hoe. Also in Plymouth, the navy decided to withdraw its sites from the project. In Glasgow, the only explanation offered by the district council for refusing Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles permission to hang a tiny facsimile of a 1950s council house from the triumphal arches around the city chambers was that the work was "inappropriate". Such verdicts only confirm the health and relevance of a public art that has jumped off its pedestal.



Action Men: Brisley's monument to the heroic male worker (above) in Govan; and, left, Jetelova's transformed air-raid shelter, Plymouth

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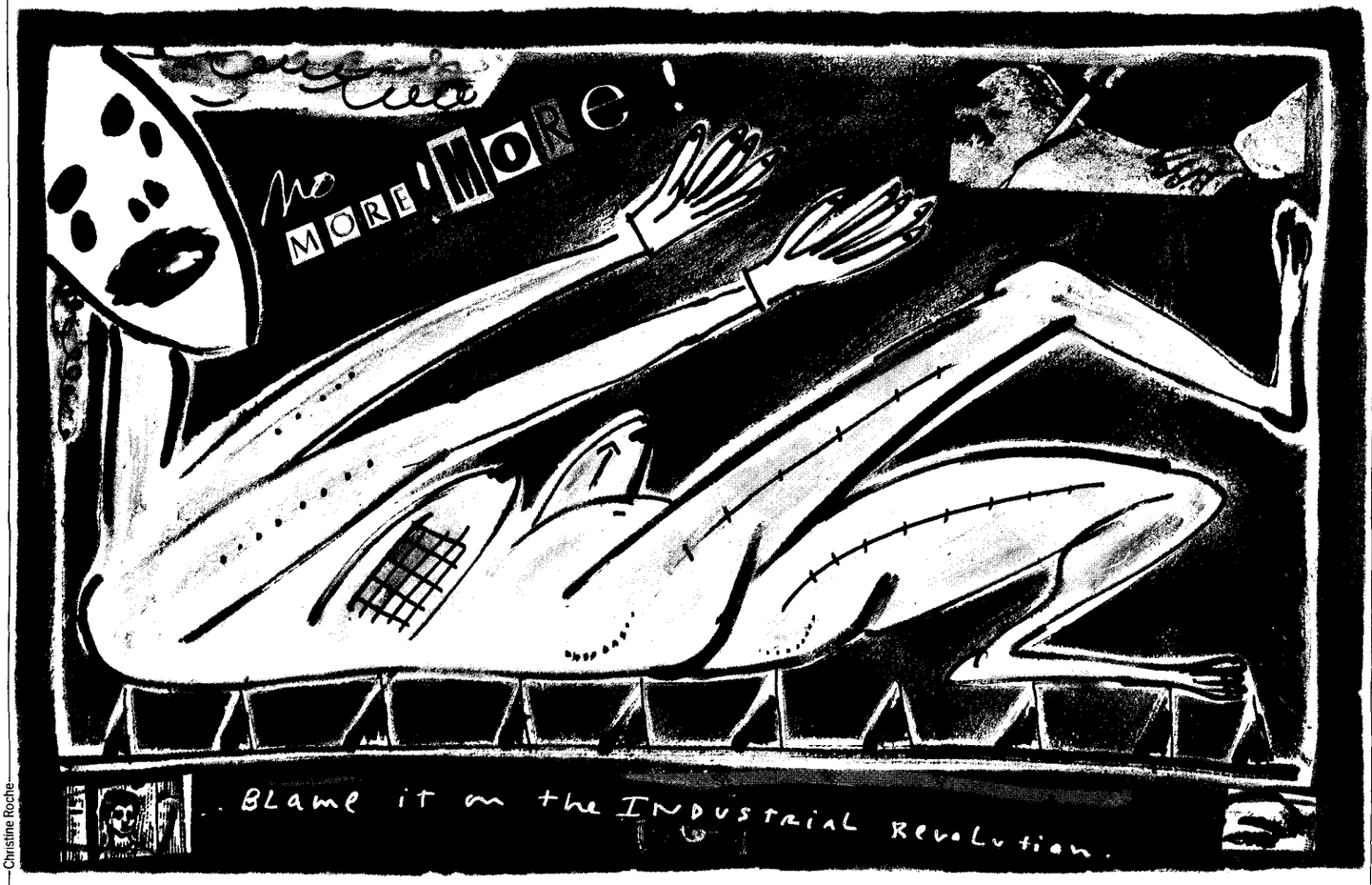

Christine Roche

The suffering sex

THE BEAUTY MYTH
Naomi Wolf
Chatto & Windus £13.95

Justine Picardie

A great deal of attention has been paid to this book: the *Sunday Times* has paid a large sum of money to serialise it; the author, a young American woman called Naomi Wolf, recently appeared on both *The Late Show* and breakfast television. Magazine profiles have been written; glamorous pictures taken of the attractive Ms Wolf. For *The Beauty Myth* is, according to the publishers, "the direct descendant of *The Second Sex* and *The Female Eunuch*", "a cultural hand grenade for the nineties", "the book which no woman today can afford to ignore".

The result of all this publicity is, perhaps, that *The Beauty Myth* will be viewed with a sharper eye than might otherwise have been the case. Naomi Wolf has, at 27 years old, a great deal to live up to. And the problem is that her central thesis, that unreal images of female beauty oppress women, is not as remarkable as the hype might have led us to believe.

Susie Orbach, among others, has already covered this ground in her eloquent book, *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Naomi Wolf's variation on a familiar theme is that, "we are in the midst of a violent backlash to feminism that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women's advancement." This is a perfectly valid argument, but, as the book progresses, it is often muddled.

We are told, for instance, that the beauty myth has its origins in the industrial revolution. Before then, there was a halcyon age when "the value of all women who were not aristocrats or prostitutes lay in their work skills, material shrewdness, strength and fertility." A little later, Naomi Wolf informs us that, "until women's emancipation, professional beauties were anonymous, low in status, unrespectable." But what of Nell Gwynn? Unrespectable, perhaps, but certainly not anonymous. Or Emma Hamilton, or even Helen of Troy?

Even more confusing are the arguments about beauty and pain. She asserts that, for biological reasons, "from the beginning of their history until just before the 1960s, women's gender caused them pain." But once childbirth became less painful, and avoidable through contraception and abortion, "in the strange new absence of female pain the myth put beauty in its place... Women willingly took on this new version of pain exacted by beauty because freedom from sexual pain left a gap in female identity." As a result, she continues, women starve themselves and submit to horrific plastic surgery.

Not only is this a somewhat patronising view of women (poor dears, we simply can't do without a regular dose of agony), the theory does not seem to encompass the pain endured by African women among others, who suffer cliterodectomy as well as unanaesthetised childbirth, and Chinese women, whose toes dropped off when their feet were bound in the

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interests of beauty long before the industrial revolution.

But most confusing of all is Naomi Wolf's use of statistics. We are told, for instance, without any source, that "cosmetic surgery doubled its rate every five years in the US, until it tripled in two years; it doubles every decade in Britain. A city of women greater than San Francisco has been cut open in the US; in Britain, a town of women the size of Whitby." Elsewhere she states that "in England one wife in seven is raped by her husband... In Scotland, one woman in six is raped by her husband."

I found myself, in the week that I read this book, looking furtively at the women I passed in the street. Were they secretly starving themselves, had they been raped, were they tortured by self-loathing, or by the scalpels of sadistic plastic surgeons?

No doubt many of them were suffering, but perhaps not always for the reasons elaborated by Naomi Wolf. Among her reams of statistics are those that point out that working women are exhausted; she believes that we are tired out by the battle to keep ourselves looking beautiful —a treadmill which presumably diverts our hamster-like brains from more worthwhile activities. Personally, I am feeling rather tired at the moment not because of any relentless pursuit of beauty, but because my baby rises at six every morning. (And I am sure that I am not alone in this particular inconvenience.)

Yet, for all this, there are reasons to admire *The Beauty Myth*. Naomi Wolf offers a sharp analysis of the absurd standards of female beauty imposed by male employers; and the account of her own teenage anorexia is moving, as is the short description of the wasting away of a college friend. ("A boy caught her before she fell, and offered her to me, wriggling like a troublesome baby... Her limbs were as light as hollow birch branches, the scrolls of their bark whole, but the marrow crumbled, the sap gone brittle. I folded her up easily, because there was nothing to her.")

Perhaps because Naomi Wolf is young and beautiful herself, she felt the need to prove her work to be sober and serious and full of facts. But it is the brief snatches of emotive writing from her own experience that are far more convincing than the endless statistics, and more compelling than the lengthy admonishments "to put a non-competitive experience of beauty into play". Even so, I would rather read Naomi Wolf's worthy prose on the front page of the *Sunday Times* Style section than yet another extract from yet another diet book, and for that I am most grateful to her.

Writing and action

MY SON'S STORY
Nadine Gordimer
Bloomsbury £13.99
AGE OF IRON
J M Coetzee
Secker & Warburg £12.99

Sean French

Auden's great political poem, "Spain", is paradoxically about the redundancy of art at moments of historical crisis. At such times the concerns of culture and private life are consigned to the past or saved to be rediscovered in the future. Today is for "the expending of powers/On the flat ephemeral pamphlet and the boring meeting".

Nadine Gordimer has written some ephemera in her life and has attended more than her share of boring meetings, but she has consistently been able to find a space for the novel, where the pressing public events meet and conflict with the individual life. The results of this must be, if they are to be worth anything artistically, more than just public statements designed to aid the struggle. But has anything in South African life been more important than the struggle against the apartheid system?

Both of these excellent new novels could be made to sound like stark political parables. *My Son's Story* is about a coloured family of political activists. The father, Sonny, begins a clandestine affair with a white woman, Hannah, while he is in detention. Meanwhile the mother, Aila, gradually becomes politicised.

Age of Iron refers precisely to the time when Auden controversially considered new qualities were required, when we may have to abandon our cosy virtue for "the conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder". The subject is the phenomenon, currently preoccupying all South Africans, of the highly politicised, battle-hardened young men and boys in the black townships who seem beyond any moderate control. A white woman objects but her maid defends these children who reject the authority of their parents: "These are good children, they are like iron, we are proud of them."

But both stories are refracted through perceptions of the personal realm. *My Son's Story* begins with the son, Will, spotting his father with Hannah at a cinema and realising the truth about the illicit relationship. It is a moment of enforced growing up, in which Will apprehends his father's sexuality. His younger sister flees the country to join the armed struggle and his mother undergoes a quiet, private development of her own. The very act of writing the novel, as Will attempts to fill in the gaps of his knowledge with his imagination, is an attempt to control and unite a family that is being exploded by public events.

Gordimer's narrative explores the conflicts between the private and public realm, writing and action, with an enormously impressive, complicated intelligence. The book ends with an authorial withdrawal: "I am a writer and this is my first book—that I can never publish." So what have we read? This is a captivating and fascinating novel.

Coetzee views the death throes of white South Africa through the dying consciousness of Elizabeth, a Cape Town white woman with terminal cancer. In her final weeks she encounters a (white) vagrant, Mr Verceuil, in her garden, and takes him in. The insistent, parabolic nature of this book is obvious even from such a bald summary, and, curiously enough, it is also strongly reminiscent of Alan Bennett's brilliant recent memoir of a female vagrant who lived in a caravan in his front garden (and the comparison does not necessarily work to Coetzee's advantage).

The identification of Verceuil with a sort of Angel of Death and the image of the couple as a representation of white South Africa's sterile mortality is perhaps the less successful part of the book.

Dying is traditionally a process of withdrawal from the world. Coetzee tellingly reverses this and it is in her last weeks that Elizabeth first truly goes out in the baffling society she has lived in. Like a politicised Ebenezer Scrooge she achieves a new understanding, but, unlike him, she has no comforting sense of being able to solve the problem herself: "Let me tell you, when I walk upon this land, this South Africa, I have a gathering feeling of walking upon black faces. They are dead but the spirit has not left them. They lie there heavy and obdurate, waiting for my feet to pass, waiting for me to go, waiting to be raised up again. Millions of figures of pig iron floating under the skin of the earth. The age of iron waiting to return."

If Gordimer and Coetzee have faith in what art can do, they know what it can't do as well.

The right to rule

POLITICAL LEGITIMACY AND THE STATE
Rodney Barker
Oxford University Press £25

Anthony Wright

Which regime is more legitimate—Margaret Thatcher's or Saddam Hussein's? And what about the Kuwait of the Emir? Tricky stuff this. If legitimacy is about acceptance by the ruled of a ruler's right to rule, it is not so clear (to put it at its lowest) that the regime in Iraq is less legitimate than the regime in Britain.

It only becomes so—and here is the crunch—when we try to give some normative content to the idea of legitimacy. But are we justified in doing this? Not according to a letter in the press last week from a spokesman for the exiled Kuwaiti ruling family, rejecting that element of the *New York Times* peace plan which involved adding democracy to freedom for his country. The letter, ever so politely, said thank you but no thank you, explained that theirs was a gentle, decent and benign despotism, and that their ways were not our ways. Just get our country back for us was the message and let us worry (or not) about our own legitimacy.

Outrageous special pleading? Double standards of the worst kind? Not if we accept

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Rodney Barker's account of what political legitimacy is and is not, in this scholarly and elegant essay on the concept. He follows Max Weber in holding that the existence and maintenance of government is the fundamental question for study, that this directs attention to the nature of beliefs in a government's right to govern (where the famous Weberian trilogy of ideal types of legitimation—traditional, charismatic and legal-rational—is still judged to provide the most useful map of the terrain) and that political legitimacy should be treated as "an historically observable set of justified relationships rather than a normatively awarded status". It is a matter of beliefs about governing rights, not the rights themselves.

You can see why Weber's way of treating the legitimacy of rulers has incurred the charge of amoralism, but Barker makes a persuasive case for the defence. If you want to understand how governors are able to govern, as they routinely do, then it makes more sense to see legitimacy as an audit of allegiance rather than an exercise in moral accounting in which regimes are given marks out of ten on a normative scoreboard. The issue may be put like this: a political philosopher may be able to tell you why a regime should be obeyed, or not obeyed, but this does not tell you whether or why the regime is actually obeyed. Attempts to dress up one kind of account as another kind (as with some of the neo-Marxist theories of "legitimation crisis" which flourished briefly) usually end badly. This is the case for preferring legitimacy-as-observation over legitimacy-as-value.

It is about the justifications offered, and accepted or rejected, for ruling. The importance of such justification has long been understood (not least by rulers). Plato's philosopher-king was to be buttressed by mystical mumbo-jumbo about gold in the soul. The medieval world had its own mumbo-jumbo about divine rights and cosmic order. When Machiavelli asked whether it was better for a ruler to be feared or loved, both the question and his answer (feared) were of that mechanical kind that would soon need to be supplemented by something more. When Rousseau declared that man was born free but was everywhere in chains and asked, "what can make it legitimate?", the modern question had been asked—and those who wanted to rule had to offer a modern answer.

Perhaps that is the point about the Gulf. There the modern question has not been asked and different kinds of legitimacy are exposed, and opposed. Rodney Barker's cool-headed discussion at least helps us get the conceptual context right. He is particularly good on the way in which legitimacy can be distributed unevenly and why this matters ("the erosion of a legitimate relationship with its tank-commanders may be of more significance for the state than a similar failure with its political philosophers"), and he has interesting things to say on how states can subvert their own legitimacy. Enter the poll tax. And the rest.

This may well turn out to be one of the least anticipated but most durable consequences of Thatcherism. Perhaps it is true, as Barker argues, that in Britain the rituals of legitimacy are mainly for élite consumption (and for the tourists), but he too easily dismisses the role of Bagehot's "dignified" constitution as a means to "excite and preserve the reverence of the population". Royal babies have done their job well in the past. But now, as the glue of legitimacy starts to come unstuck, they are being asked to do more than a baby—or even a broken arm—should have to bear.

Dark anger

AFFLICTION
Russell Banks
Picador £12.95

Stephen Trombley

"'Sometimes,' he said, 'sometimes you just forget who you are. Especially when you're sick of who you are.'" The "he" is Wade Whitehouse, just the other side of 40, a full-time well driller and part-time policeman in Lawford, New Hampshire. He has been twice married to, and twice divorced from, his high-school sweetheart, is father of an 11-year-old daughter who has turned against him, and is a fair and even personable man, except when governed by rage.

Affliction is Wade's story, told by his brother—the only college-educated member of a typical working-class family in a typical small town in the north east of America. The town of Lawford is a remnant, a place whose economy revolves around gas stations and diners, a place whose natural beauty can be purchased for a song by smart young Massachusetts people with money. Lawford has made Wade Whitehouse what he is: bitter, confused, old before his time, a witness to the death of the thing within himself which allowed him to see goodness in others, to find gentleness towards the women in his life.

One day the anger that holds Wade together breaks loose, and he beats his aged father to death and shoots a man. The brother feels compelled to tell Wade's story in an attempt to understand his actions, and to dispel the shame that attaches to them.

The first person is a gawky and faintly embarrassing point of view from which to write except when handled by a master of ironic distance. Banks does not have sufficient control over the brother's narrative to make it anything other than earnest and pedantic: "It is easier by far to understand diplomatic manoeuvres in Jordan, natural calamities in the third world, and the economy of addictive drugs than an isolated explosion of homicidal rage in a small American town." This is simply not true. It is a piece of romantic earnestness, a piece of dull seriousness which is wholly contradicted by Banks's achievement in creating Wade Whitehouse, whom we understand very well.

Banks captures perfectly the redneck lingo of the north east, and finds behind the swagger the permanent confusion and emptiness that characterises hemmed-in lives that reached their zenith before the age of 18, in moments of glory on the high-school football field or on the back-seats of cars at drive-ins. These are people who are old before their time, who at 40 remain adolescents trapped in sagging bodies. Wade looks out of his and remarks to his lover Margie Fogg that, in the afterglow of sex, he can see the young girl in her. Margie thinks to herself, that is Wade's saving grace. As long as he is capable of seeing that, then he and everyone around him are safe from the terrible anger inside him. But she also knows that she cannot see the little boy in him. And she knows that Wade is well enough aware that contact with his "golden interior", as Banks calls it, is slipping away.

Banks has made a character who is driven to commit murders which the reader is prepared to understand, if not to forgive; and in so doing he has identified the dark anger which gives hundreds of American towns like Lawford their weird quality.

Cavaliers and others

THE MYTHS WE LIVE BY
Raphael Samuel and
Paul Thompson (editors)
Routledge £12.99 paperback/£35 hardback

Colin Ward

Myths are raw material for anthropologists at a social, and psychoanalysts at a personal, level. Historians tend to attempt *demythologisation*. For example, we all grow up with a vision of our predecessors as either cavaliers or roundheads in the 17th-century civil war, with all the ideological choices this implies. Modern historians stress that most English communities banded together just to keep the warring factions out, when both sides were attempting to press them into service. As Ronald Hutton put it, the local community, not parliament, defeated Charles I, "not from hatred of his cause but from hatred of the war itself".

But to this day we mythologise our family past, just as the National Trust, founded to give poor people access to the countryside, now spreads the myth of the English country house and its patronage. We are either descended from the aristocracy, fallen on hard times, or from the poor (forefathers hanged for sheep-stealing or poaching, or transported to Australia) who had made it through their own efforts. We all had either an idyllic or a brutally deprived childhood. We are all, according to personal taste, cavaliers or roundheads, and we all create national, social and family myths.

The editors of this book are both pioneers of oral history and have patiently listened to the same mythology 100 times over: the superhuman John Hardy or John Henry pile-driving man or Big Hewer, and the endlessly resource-

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ful mother figure, Mother Courage, tenaciously battling for her brood. Ignominious defeats, like the General Strike or Dunkirk, are transmuted into epic battles.

These two editors suggest, in a brilliant introduction, that there is simply no point in denying and brushing off the imposition of mythology from the truth about what really happened. Who cares if Winston Churchill never actually instructed the troops to fire on Welsh miners, since this belief shaped voting patterns for generations and accurately reflected approved attitudes? Lady Elgar, wife of the uniquely English composer, sincerely believed that the striking railwaymen should be shot.

Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson plunge boldly into the world of public and family myths to produce a book, richer than a fruit cake, thanks to a worldwide collection of ingredients from the mythologies of people on the margins of official culture and history. Has anyone stopped to think about the impact of the Anglo-Boer war on the Cape coloured population, or what it was like to be a German domestic servant in the Netherlands on the eve of the Nazi occupation, or how the Scots created the legend of Wallace and Robert the Bruce, or the Australians comforted themselves with the Anzac martyrology?

It is all here, along with the way in which Swedish lumberjacks slotted their autonomy into an upwardly mobile society, the way Puerto Rican woman fitted themselves into American industry, or the myths by which Italian communist factory workers accommodated the political triumph of Fascism. This wonderfully far-reaching book shows how we all depend on myths for aspiration, or as consolation for lost hopes and intolerable defeats.

Never mind the quality

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION IN BRITAIN: VOLUME FOUR, COMPANIES AND PROGRAMMES 1968-80
Jeremy Potter
Macmillan £45

Michael Leapman

When Granada was applying for the renewal of its ITV franchise in 1980, the Independent Broadcasting Authority diffidently presented it with some research showing that some of its programmes were a bit... well, a bit, you know, *unpopular*. The oldest surviving ITV company replied with the arrogance that has been the prerogative of the public broadcaster throughout the ages:

"Granada does not believe that research into audience appreciation should become a factor weighing too heavily upon the creative people who make the programmes. The most efficient form of audience research has usually proved that since *Rin Tin Tin* is the most popular film of the year, the producer would be well advised for his next venture to make *Son of Rin Tin Tin*. We believe that, particularly in areas of drama and imaginative programmes, creative talent should lead and not react to public opinion."

This pompous creed, which Jeremy Potter quotes without comment, means that viewers should be made to watch what the TV companies think is good for them rather than what they might actually enjoy.

In expressing it in such unambiguous terms, Granada must have known that its franchise was at that point unassailable, given its central role in the liberal media establishment which had yet to suffer the full onslaught of nascent Thatcherism.

It cannot be so confident of its fate in the 1993 franchise round, when its record of fine programme-making will be only one of the factors that the new Independent Television Commission takes into account when appointing the new licence-holders. That is why Granada programme-makers got together to form the nucleus of the Campaign for Quality Television, which successfully lobbied for changes in this year's Broadcasting Bill.

The government's original intention was to award the franchises to the highest bidders, but now the ITC will also consider the potential quality of a company's programmes. How it will gauge this is a matter for conjecture. Potter reminds us that it was easy to bamboozle the old IBA with impossible promises—witness London Weekend Television in 1967 and TV-AM in 1980, both of which came close to collapse soon after they began broadcasting, then changed their promised programme mix significantly.

Connoisseurs of irony have enjoyed the spectacle of the old Granada hands in the CQT urging greater powers for the regulatory body. For Granada has always chafed at attempts by the IBA to exert control over its programmes, notably the troublesome *World in Action*, with its irritating tendency to be controversial, especially over Northern Ireland.

The IBA encouraged documentaries but was embarrassed when they caused offence to politicians. Potter relates how it solved this dilemma by urging, in 1970, that there should be fewer programmes about English-speaking countries and more about the third world. This may not have done much for ratings but was welcomed by programme-makers—more lush trips to distant parts—and allowed the IBA to show its robustness by brushing off protests from offended governments, including China, Burma and Saudi Arabia.

Such disputes, as well as the heated debates over broadcasting policy, may fade as television plays a less central role in our lives. Figures published last week by the Policy Studies Institute show that people are spending less time in front of the box. And where they have access to satellite or cable, they are less drawn to the mixed fare on BBC1 and ITV, preferring specialised channels devoted to movies, or sport, or pop music.

Thus "important" programmes such as challenging plays and investigative documentaries—always more important to those who made them than those they were made for—are likely to disappear from protected slots on mainstream television and be accommodated on specialist arts and news channels, where they will command smaller audiences and consequently smaller budgets. If they want to continue serving the mass market, maybe the ITV companies should dust off the script of *Son of Rin Tin Tin*, after all.

Teasing didactics

DARCY'S UTOPIA
Fay Weldon
Collins £13.95

Patricia Craig

With her recent novels Fay Weldon doesn't so much use a plot as a ploy, a device to get things moving. There's a strong idea, or motif, at the centre of the narrative, and a lot of smart social comment and contemporary vicissitudes surrounding it. *Darcy's Utopia* is in this mould. The blueprint for a pleasanter society, one without money or overpopulation, is ascribed to a Professor Julian Darcy, currently in prison; but really it's his second wife Eleanor who is at the bottom of the notion. Eleanor is issuing her life story, bit by bit, to the features editor of a woman's weekly by the name of *Aura*, and at the same time submitting to a more intensive grilling on the subject of Darcian monetarism (and other things) by a journalist from the *Independent*.

The two interviewers of Eleanor Darcy, Valerie Jones of *Aura* and Hugo Vansitart, find themselves seated side by side at the Media Awards dinner, and the next minute they're holed up together in a Holiday Inn, while the world—or at least the part of it affected by their behaviour—goes hang. They only emerge to continue the two-pronged examination of Eleanor Darcy, who seems to have spent her life sloughing off various skins: born Apricot Smith, to an incipient alcoholic and an off-hand banjo-player, she has passed through the stage of being Ellen Parkin, before coming to fruition as Eleanor Darcy.

Eleanor has trouble with dates. Married at 17 to a Bernard Parkin, a Catholic on the verge of converting to Marxism, she stayed married for 15 years before taking up with Professor Darcy, yet gives her age as 30. (The author's confusion over dates is even more striking, unless we're meant to believe that Eleanor's grandmother Rhoda gave birth to a daughter at nine or ten.) Still, what with the devil hovering outside the window of a polytechnic, household ghosts playing havoc with the ornaments and episodes of ill-wishing taking place at college, Eleanor's concern with chronology is perhaps understandably perfunctory. Her aim is to tamper to the fullest extent with social usages, though whether in the interests of regeneration

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NEW STATESMAN & SOCIETY Autumn Books special issue 5th October

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or mischief-making, it is hard to say.

The author's aim is a bit clearer, but not much. She is, as ever, out to point the finger at social abuses, and the "Utopia" motif enables her to proffer some extreme solutions to certain miseries in her usual playful manner. She keeps our attention through all the throwaway enormities, colourful side-issues and teasing didactics of her newest work of fiction, but fails to indicate exactly what it is that these add up to. Too much randomness, and not enough firm control, mar *Darcy's Utopia*.

Death by revenge

TO ENCOURAGE THE OTHERS
David Yallop
Corgi £4.99
'LET HIM HAVE IT, CHRIS'
M J Trow
Constable £12.95

Bill Greenwell

Derek Bentley was 19, Chris Craig 16. Both were illiterate. Bentley had a mental age of ten. In November 1952, more for a lark than for profit, Craig persuaded Bentley to help him rob a butcher's shop in Croydon. But the butcher was in.

So they shinned up the drainpipe to the roof of a warehouse instead. They were seen instantly and surrounded by police. Bentley surrendered right away, upset by Craig's revelation that (as usual) he had a gun.

In the succeeding half-hour, Craig winged a detective and shot a constable, Sidney Miles, between the eyes. At the trial, two policemen swore that Bentley yelled, "Let him have it, Chris!" A third constable, most peculiarly, heard this, but would not identify Bentley's voice.

The upshot? Craig, as a minor, was imprisoned (and released in 1963). But Bentley, despite a public furore, was hanged as having incited the killing, *even though he was under arrest at the time*.

The five words allegedly uttered by Bentley (he denied saying them, Craig denied hearing them) *were* the case against him, though he also had the establishment on his neck. The Lord Chief Justice, Goddard, who makes Lord Lane look like Harry Corbett, had a political bone to pick. Capital punishment—this is often forgotten—was suspended in the forties while a Criminal Justice Bill was debated. The murderer of one policeman did not therefore die. Bentley's death was revenge.

Not until David Yallop's book appeared in 1971 was the furore rekindled. In its revised form, it now appears—incredibly, for the first time—in paperback. It is tenaciously argued and, but for one name, meticulous in its attention to detail. Yallop does not merely chronicle the affair on Bentley's behalf, however. He thinks PC Miles was shot by a police bullet, and that Craig was also innocent. Craig (a Bedfordshire plumber when the *People* found him last year) thinks he shot Miles, however, and it does seem merely by chance that several weren't hit.

Derek Bentley's family commemorates his death

Yallop repeatedly points to the mysterious absence of testimony by three policemen called to the warehouse. The spelling of one of their names is the error M J Trow spots. Yallop has called a PC Brigden "Bugden" for 20 years. It is not clear to Trow—who indicates that Yallop is possessive about "his" case—why Yallop never pursued the three. I'd have thought it obvious that they refused to have anything to do with him.

Trow's trump is the testimony of one of the missing three, now 80, PC Claude Pain. How did Trow stumble on him? Pain's son was Trow's wife's driving instructor! Trow has become understandably obsessed by the case, but, as he acknowledges, it is upon Yallop that all depends. Trow, not unreasonably, dismisses the police bullet, but proposes an equally unlikely theory that Craig was firing warning shots.

Trow's scoop was partly predicted by Yallop. What even Yallop did not foresee was that Pain was not only in the vicinity, but *on the roof*. Indeed, he was the first to Miles's body. And PC Pain never heard the words "Let him have it, Chris!" either. As Yallop and Trow demonstrate, the phrase "Let him have it" is lifted from a somewhat similar case in 1940.

Yallop has the jigsaw, Trow the final piece. But Trow's discovery is 38 years too late for simple-minded Derek Bentley, whose execution is surely the most flagrant miscarriage of justice this century.

The wandering monk

FREEDOM IN EXILE
The Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet
Hodder & Stoughton £14.95

Caroline Moorehead

In the spring of 1938, a search party sent out by the Tibetan government to find the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama—the last one having died five years before—reached a village in the far north. Led by a number of prophetic signs, they turned into a small courtyard belonging to a farmer, the father of four surviving children, one already identified as the reincarnation of a high lama. The small boy they found and recognised as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama was called Lhamo Thondup.

The child was taken off to a monastery and in 1940 dispatched on the three-month journey by mule and foot to Lhasa. A year later, his last of what he calls "temporal liberty", Lhamo Thondup was officially proclaimed spiritual leader of Tibet and enthroned in the 1,000-room palace of Potala, as the living Buddha and earthly manifestation of Avalokiteshvara the Bodhisattva of Compassion or "God-King". He was five years old.

Kings, queens, popes and spiritual leaders are tacitly assumed to have no private lives; or at least no ordinary private lives. Whether they can type, or prefer tea to coffee, is seldom regarded as a matter of legitimate public concern. Part of the charm of *Freedom in Exile* lies in its very ordinariness, the willingness of the author to offer up some of the minutiae of an extraordinary life without embarrassment.

The jacket consists of a portrait of the Dalai Lama, in Buddhist robes and glasses, looking thoughtful and benign. The photograph appears to be that of a much older man, not surprisingly perhaps, given the young age at which he had to assume the considerable burdens of his new office. While still only five, he took part every day in lengthy government meetings, surrounded by his entourage of tutors. At 15, with the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese, he found himself leader of six million confused people. At 24, having endured a decade of broken promises, he fled into exile on a mule, leaving behind him a massacre of Tibetans and the start of repressive Chinese rule.

India offered him asylum, and in 1959 he began a new life as a head of government in exile. He has pursued it ever since, following with anxiety the deteriorating fortunes of his countrymen—since the Chinese invasion, over a million Tibetans are said to have died as a direct result of Peking's policies—and waiting for the day he could return to Lhasa. That might have come after the fall of the Gang of Four, but the moment was never quite right, and its likelihood has receded in the wake of Tiananmen Square and the current oppressive Chinese attitudes towards Tibet.

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The years of exile have not been idle ones. The Dalai Lama travels continually, both abroad and round the settlements set up by Tibetan refugees in India. When at home, in a house in Dharamsala in the north, he leads an austere but not uncomfortable life, divided between prayer and public affairs, *realpolitik* taking its place alongside the consultation of oracles. Last December, he received the Nobel Prize for Peace. He admits to enjoying badminton, and shooting at birds of prey which come to harass the smaller birds in his garden—to scare them away, not kill them.

The Dalai Lama, in this book of reminiscences, comes across as a gentle, decent, unassuming man of considerable shrewdness and enviable tranquillity of mind.

His life in exile takes the form of a Candide-like journey around the western world, its geography as well as its mores, which he both admires as energetic and creative, and deplores as leading to insecurity and too keen a concern with the absolute. There is nothing patronising in his stand; rather, an air of sorrow and bewilderment.

If kings and spiritual leaders have no private lives, they are not regarded as figures of high politics or bitter controversy either. *Freedom in Exile* is a temperate book, at times even bland, for all the Dalai Lama's anguish over the destruction of his country. The very attributes of a Buddhist monk, compassion, acceptance and a long philosophical view of existence, are not those guaranteed to fit in with the modern robust and revelatory style of autobiography. The most successful passages in the book are certainly those about his solitary childhood in the Potala palace. In the absence of a more astringent look at world political leaders and their attitude towards Tibet, and the devastation of Tibet itself by the Chinese, one longs for more of these.

The jaded five

THE INN AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD
Alice Thomas Ellis
Viking £12.99

Duncan Wu

"I have little doubt of our having pre-existed," remarks Gordon of Khartoum, one of the more significant ghosts in Alice Thomas Ellis's latest novel. In fact, the five jaded Londoners who escape one Christmas to an inn on a remote Scottish island are swallowed up in a ghost story with a very romantic undercurrent—for Gordon's belief in pre-existence, and the recurrent imagery of the sea, recall Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode", where "the children sport upon the shore,/And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore." The spiritual climax of the novel is based on Wordsworth, when Eric, the innkeeper, witnesses the dead dancing on the seashore to celestial music: "The music was so sweet: it crept over his consciousness as the soft summer tide creeps over the shore, and Eric thought he was fainting."

Its mystic finale has charm, but the plot is little more than formula: five people isolated in a hotel, with only a few locals and the innkeeper for company. The Londoners are defined by their jobs—Jessica, an actress; Anita, a shop-assistant; Jon, an actor; Ronald, a psychoanalyst; and Harry, the retired soldier—and they seldom transcend the stereotypes associated with them. Ronald analyses, reeling off chunks of Freud, while Jon stares into mirrors, and Harry writes his biography of Gordon.

Ellis is more interested in ideas than characters, and her novel is held together less by its drama than by a persistent nihilism that balances the unifying vision of the novel's climax. As the story begins, Eric is contemplating wife-murder. Harry wants to believe in love, but knows that the emptiness within "could merely be lessened, contracted... with the assistance of the Grim Reaper".

As these examples suggest, Ellis's pessimism owes much to the incompatibility of the sexes, which stems from the enslavement of her male characters to roles they cannot hope to play successfully. The worst example of this is Jon, who is so besotted with the image of himself as "a hero like the men of myth, commanding the mighty waves single-handed", that he sails a leaky dinghy in the middle of a storm. For Ellis, male role-playing at its most extreme is a form of madness—but since this is a comedy, its tragic results are offset by Eric's night-time vision.

Ellis has remarked, "I think of men as mostly, though not invariably, dreadfully dull." The characters of *The Inn at the End of the World* behave with all the predictability this implies. Ellis's scepticism about romantic love has produced some light and charming comedy in the past, and where this novel succeeds is in its satire on the lasciviousness of the islanders. But the protagonists are too shadowy to sustain this novel, which is redeemed, too late, by the vision with which it concludes, where the dead "return to dance at the scene of their demise".

Fear of disorder

TALKING HOUSES: TEN LECTURES
Colin Ward
Freedom Press £5

Peter Campbell

As a commentator on housing, Colin Ward has the advantage of never having hoped for much from political action. In *Talking Houses*, a collection of speeches from the last decade, he has no need to apologise for advocating solutions that failed. He quotes unaltered anarchist principles he has been promoting since 1945, and still offers propaganda about housing "based on currently observable facts and on people's own efforts to discover alternatives". "As I have a few simple ideas to propagate," he says, "I endlessly repeat the same examples and quotations from other people." They have not gone stale.

Ward believes that when people cooperate on a small scale and choose, manage and even build for themselves, they get better housing than when governments make choices for them. He is an enthusiast for tenants' associations, self-building and the shanty town which evolves into a suburb. He writes perceptively about communities like those at Pitsea and Laidon in Essex which rose on poor agricultural land, sold before the second world war in unserviced plots to people who eventually put on them anything from a converted bus to a detached bungalow. Little epics of self-help abound, and these, even more than the statistical and economic studies that give his arguments general validity, persuade me he's right.

So, one asks, what drove many intelligent thinkers to believe coercive planning was the way to solve housing problems?

Political instinct on left and right tells governments to keep control at the centre, and benevolent capitalists and radical socialists have their own theoretical justifications for the company town and the housing estate. But very often the reason people are persuaded that it is a good thing to stop other people getting on with their own thing is simply that it looks untidy. In his Sharp Memorial lecture, "Anarchy or Order", Ward writes of the "vision of order, logic and dignified formal seemliness" which made Thomas Sharp, a pioneer of town planning in the thirties and forties, despise the aspirations of those who wanted a small car, a suburban house and garden, and a chalet at the seaside.

Fear of disorder makes us give up freedoms we later regret, but the bargain offered can seem a good one. The look of preserved Olde England relieves anxieties which rise when we stand on the edge of garbage-laden beaches and hedgeless fields of barley. The prospectus on public housing that governments endorsed as a cure for damp, verminous slums also promised to stop suburban man destroying the countryside by planting it with pebble-dashed semis. Many of the failed planning moves which Ward describes were attempts to build a community from the visual surface down; it is greatly to his credit that he does not gloss over the difficulty, or the practical consequences, of building from the bottom up. Free choice can result in communities that look chaotic if Bath and Brasilia, or even Welwyn and Letchworth, are your paradigms, and brings with it Peacehaven as well as Walter Segal's infill housing. One is not necessarily going to be pleased with what one's neighbours want—the Swiss system of local taxation may cut central government down to size, but it is no guarantee of minority rights.

Ward's reports from the housing frontier offer congenital optimists comfort. In the post-oil, post-greenhouse, even post-nuclear world, if there are any of us left, we are likely to be on our own. Decades of official directives and central control have kept from us a great state secret: human beings are, unless culturally disabled, well qualified to meet their essential needs—food, shelter and conviviality.

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Rent-to-mortgage:
WHO BUYS IT?!
MILLIONS of council tenants will be given the key to the door in a new vote-winning scheme to make them home owners. For the cost of their rent – or even less – they will soon be able to buy their homes in an amazing extension to the Government's home ownership campaign.
by MAGGIE PHIBBS
Tory leaders have agreed to put the revolutionary 'rents to mortgage' scheme at the heart of Maggie's most radical general election manifesto yet.
Ministers think the scheme, which could turn five million council tenants into home owners, will SHAME Neil Kinnock's Labour party, which has had to admit it was wrong to oppose the popular right to buy. Labour is unlikely to support the scheme.
GIVEAWAY
A minister said last night: "Handing over ownership of the remaining council homes to their tenants is certain to be in our manifesto."
"Flexi-ownership will appeal to traditional Labour voters while spreading the prosperity of the country under the Government."
The Government might also introduce English pilot schemes before the election, in battleground areas like the Midlands.
A tenant of five years gets a 20% discount, with up to 55% after 15 years. Michelle Forsyth, who has bought her Scottish Homes house under the scheme, told ROOF: "It's a FANTASTIC idea. I never thought I'd be able to own my own home, because I couldn't afford right to buy."
NEST EGG
"But now I know I'll be well off in my old age with the nest egg I've always dreamed about. Home ownership is wonderful. It's changed my life. The Government should introduce this scheme for all council tenants as soon as possible.
"No-one will want to stay with the council – the repairs never get done."
Trial schemes in Scottish and Welsh housing organisations have been a RED HOT success, with hundreds of enquiries since they were set up last year.
Maggie is expected to announce a similar give-away scheme for all council tenants at the Tory conference next month in her bid to win a historic fourth term.
When a flexi-ownership tenant decides to sell, the generous interest-free loan on the amount not repaid in rent is returned. The difference between the original price plus the discount – probably tens of THOUSANDS of pounds – then belongs to the tenant, who can join the home ownership ladder.
Rifkind: Homes for all
Field: It was my idea
Continued on page 22.
PLUS: Soaraway mortgage arrears page 8

The great council house giveaway - fact or fiction?

A scheme to convert rents into mortgage payments on council houses is being sold as the radical centrepiece of a new Tory housing revolution, but it should carry a government health warning, says the latest issue of ROOF, Shelter's housing magazine. Stoked up by the tabloid press, the hype is a deliberate attempt to sell instant home-ownership to council tenants, but the hidden costs, and the long term financial consequences, mean the deal is hardly the sale of the century.

Don't buy the fiction, buy the facts.

ROOF, Britain's brightest housing magazine, is available on subscription six times a year for £15 to individual subscribers, or at £3 for single copies. *Other rates available - contact ROOF subscriptions for details.* Subscribe now and get the September issue free - just send back the form below.

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PUBLIC INTEREST

High standards

Labour plans to make school a better and more creative place

Chris Price

Over the past 10 years the right has sought to capture the educational agenda. The technique has been to blacken every pre-Thatcherian educational development (including many of her own achievements in the early 1970s), and to associate the new decade with testing examinations, a national curriculum and a new rigour. For better or worse, "educational standards" are now very high on the political agenda for the next general election.

How far the right has captured the high ground in the "standards" debate is more questionable. While teacher morale is perceived as low, not only because the profession has slipped in the average earnings league, the tendency to blame left-wing teachers for low standards in education—with disreputable slogans like "Sckool isnt Wurking"—was a counterproductive ploy which is now played out. Moreover, the pressure groups of the right (the Centre for Policy Studies and the Institute for Economic Affairs) have a dismal track record in achieving *their* "standards" objectives. They fought against the merger of O level with CSE into GCSE, and Sir Keith Joseph (in contrast to a dithering Shirley Williams under Labour) saw them off with ease; their current campaign to maintain a narrow, specialised, élite A-level framework is similarly failing. All the signs are that Mr MacGregor will ignore his Thatcherite junior ministers, accept the advice of the Schools Assessment and Examinations Council (SEAC) and allow A level to develop into a far broader structure.

Just as comprehensive reorganisation accelerated during Mrs Thatcher's years as minister, so the pace of development from an élite to a more open secondary school system has quickened during her period at Downing Street. In spite of its success in pushing the issue up the political agenda, many of the aspirations of the right over maintaining "élite" standards have come to nothing—largely because they were unacceptably reactionary and accorded with neither the "market" nor the "military" philosophy of the Education Reform Act.

Part of the government's current problem with standards derives from these incompatible philosophies. On the one hand, youngsters, parents and schools are urged to adopt an individualistic ethic and put their energy into competing against each other; on the other, they are compelled to conform to a national curriculum and national schemes of testing. Since the act, there has been some retrenchment and movement towards the centre; but the focus of government intentions towards schools has been blurred in the public perception by the clash of ideologies.

Is Labour going to do any better in the "standards" argument? It has a general and a specific task before it. First, there is the resource issue: all those countries with more successful education systems than our own invest a far higher proportion of GNP in them. If Labour can convince the electorate of its intention to funnel a substantial "peace dividend" into schools, this will give far more substance to its commitment to standards than proposals for structural change.

> *The enthusiasm of 16 year olds to stay on in education must be the crucial test*

On structures, Labour has now set out its intentions in *Looking to the Future*: "Nationally an Educational Standards Council (ESC) will be established. It will coordinate the work of Inspectors, set fair but rigorous systems for measuring schools' performance and agree targets with local educational authorities for raising the proportion of 16-19 year olds in education."

It is still a thin skeleton for a realistic policy. The danger is that it will be seen as one more piece of expensive, irrelevant bureaucracy. Its attraction is the opportunity to slim down some of the burgeoning quangos created over past years to run the national aspects of Conservative policy.

As currently conceived, the ESC has two roles—coordinating, at both national and local level, all those who are involved in educational quality control and working out an agreed framework of "performance-indicator" policy that will command the assent of schools. The first task is long overdue; the number of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMIs) has doubled under the current government without any additional "hands-on" role or any clear line of accountability.

It may be that a future Labour secretary of state would want to keep a small, directly accountable educational inspectorate. But the bulk of HMIs should work, at arm's length from the Department of Education and Science, under far more rigorous management and to a far more specific educational quality remit. The new ESC could, properly organised, get better value for money from this amorphous group of quality controllers.

The same is true of the local inspectorate, which has been decimated and demoralised by a decade of attacks on local government. Many local education authorities are now far too small to run an efficient local inspectorate. Guidelines on quality control should be a national responsibility, with operational responsibility devolved to the level of the school. To implement this, it would be logical for the ESC to employ most HMIs and all local inspectors.

As to the performance indicators themselves, *Looking to the Future* fixes the key one. The enthusiasm of 16 year olds to stay on in education or training must be the crucial test for an effective secondary school. For the rest there could be a package of indicators of both the formal and the hidden curriculum of the school. Tests and examinations would form an important element—and one option would be to subsume Mr Baker's two new quangos, SEAC and the National Curriculum Council (NCC), suitably slimmed down, within the ESC.

But many parents and most teachers know that the key to effective schools lies in the subtle relationship between the formal and the hidden curriculum. Do the pupils respect the building, its environment and each other? How creative and productive are the informal relationships between teachers and pupils? How genuinely are parents drawn into the whole learning and assessment process? These things are all measurable; they represent an area of education at risk from the "military" elements of Mr Baker's national curriculum, behind which Labour dutifully, and perhaps unfortunately, aligned itself. The Educational Standards Council represents an opportunity to help schools define their own standards within a more generous and effective framework.

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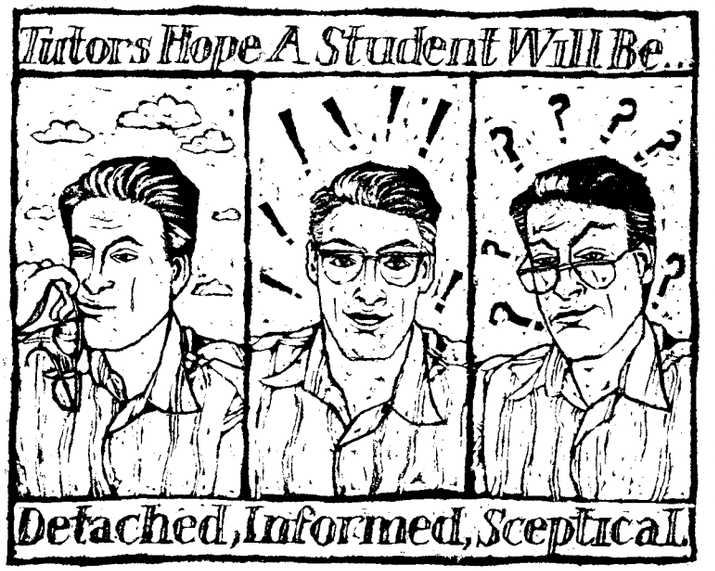
Society Today is *NSS*'s term-time page for sociology students

What's sociology for?

Pat McNeil explains why sociology offers a lot more than meets the eye



The first weeks of an A-level sociology course usually include some discussion about its purpose. Typically, all students tend to say that what they want is a good examination grade, obtained by absorbing as much sociological knowledge as they can and reproducing it on demand in the examination room. Tutors obviously share this objective on their students' behalf.

But there is also an evangelistic tendency among tutors which centres on the hope that students will also acquire the intellectual skills that will enable them to develop a detached, informed and sceptical understanding of their social and political experience. This has little to do with passing exams and much to do with the belief, expressed in the 1988 Higginson Report, that "A free society depends for its strength on the ability of individual members to make sense of their surroundings and to think for themselves." A sociological perspective, sometimes called "the sociological imagination", can play a major role in developing this ability.

It is therefore gratifying to see that the Higginson belief is shared by those who are producing the guidelines for the wide-ranging reforms that are about to be made in post-16 education and training. Since last September, a series of papers has been produced by the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the Schools Examination and Assessment Council, and the guiding principles for the 16-19 curriculum of the future are being established.

The latest of these papers is the consultation on the draft principles for AS and A level examinations. Once finalised, early in 1991, these general principles will guide the production of the new generation of AS and A level syllabuses, which will be available from 1994. It is already clear that the proposals offer sociology a real opportunity to build on its strong base at this level, where it is currently the 11th most popular A level in terms of entries.

Before this latest paper appeared, it was already known that the study programme of every 16-19 year old would have to include a set of core skills and that the curriculum must incorporate cross-curricular themes. These are not yet finalised, but the current proposals are not likely to be changed substantially.

Three of the six core skills (communication, problem-solving and personal skills) must be embedded in every A and AS syllabus, and the other three (numeracy, information technology and modern languages) are to be built in wherever possible.

Discussion:

What do you hope will be the benefits to you of studying sociology?

The sociological imagination is particularly suited to developing these skills.

"Communication" includes the ability to identify appropriate sources of information, to derive relevant information from them and to present that information in a way that is suited to their purpose. Students will have to learn how to analyse and evaluate information from libraries, textbooks and databases and to express ideas, opinions and feelings. They must learn how to listen, how to argue a case and how to convey their knowledge in a variety of media. They must, in fact, do what good sociology teaches people to do.

"Problem-solving" involves the ability to recognise and define a problem, to consider various ways of tackling it and to select an appropriate one, to plan and carry out a course of action, modifying it where necessary, and then to evaluate it. All students will have, somewhere in their course, to carry out an inquiry, investigation or research project. The bedrock of good sociology is good research, characterised by just these skills.

"Personal skills" includes the ability to evaluate one's own performance and to identify areas and set targets for self-development. Students will be assessed on their ability to manage their own learning, rather than being dependent on a tutor, to work in a team and show that they are sensitive to the needs and values of others. Such understanding and tolerance is fostered by the detached but empathetic stance of sociology.

It is clear that sociology students are already practising and developing these skills, especially when they are involved in carrying out a good piece of social research. Since the draft principles specify that up to 40 per cent of the marks at A and AS level can be for coursework, there is going to be plenty of opportunity for such research.

Of the other three core skills, numeracy and information technology can also be embedded into a sociological research project, leaving only modern languages uncovered. But this will be the case in most subjects.

The seven cross-curricular themes must feature in the programme of study offered to students. Five of these are the same as those identified for the 5-16 curriculum: economic and industrial understanding; environmental education; education for citizenship; careers education and guidance, and health education. Two more are added for 16-19 year olds: scientific and technological understanding, and aesthetic and creative understanding. The themes are clearly ones on which social science, and particularly sociology, can throw more light than any other group of disciplines.

In fact, they open up opportunities to introduce new areas of sociology. The sociology of the environment is growing fast and the sociologies of art, film and literature are all ready to make their début at this level.

The adoption of these draft principles would not mean the continuing monopoly of A levels as the flagship of academic excellence so dear to Mrs Thatcher. There is also a commitment to bridging the vocational/non-vocational divide and to broaden the 16-19 curriculum by means of AS levels. In fact, the draft principles suggest that AS levels will incorporate the essential skills, knowledge and learning of advanced study and that A levels will be an extension (roughly double) of them. This, the working party suggests, will promote the broadening of the curriculum which is advocated by virtually everyone concerned with the debate.

These proposed reforms give sociologists nothing to fear. Rather, they present an opportunity to be grasped.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 071-739-1645.

TWO SMALL CHARITIES in Cambridge working with people with learning difficulties would welcome some-one with business background to help fundraise and evolve a market strategy for our useful goods. Expenses and honorarium paid. Please contact Peter Durrant on 0223 262759/ 68040 at any time.

A FUNDRAISING ASSISTANT is needed urgently to help with an exciting new clothes project and similar event organising. Expenses paid. Contact Anna at Women's Environmental Network 071-490 2511.

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP and watch it grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2/3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 071 250 1223.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED. To help organise "Futures" - an open political and cultural event organised by the Communist Party. Advertising, promotional and administrative work + stewarding on the day (27th October). Expenses are paid. For more information contact Natalie on 071 278 4443.

MEDWAY AND SWALE KENT, Initial training for Bereavement Counsellors. Two new Branches of CRUSE are being set up and training courses starting Sept. 26th and Oct 1st respectively are being organised. A charge of £35, (or £10 consessions) will be made. For further information and application forms please contact: Mrs Margaret Lee, Bereavement Services Coordinator, Medway Hospital, Windmill Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5NY.

CHESTER AID for the Homeless requires f/time volunteer project workers to work with homeless men in Chester. Chester Aid for the Homeless has vacancies for residential volunteers in all 3 projects: an emergency hostel, night shelter and long stay resettlement centre. All volunteers receive £25 p/w + board & lodgings. For further details please contact Sally Gear on 0244 318360 or write: Roodee House, 22 Grosvenor Street, Chester CH1 2DD.

SOUTHWARK VICTIM Support Scheme. We visit victims of crome and help them emotionally and practically. We rely on volunteers for this work and need new volunteers to join us. Interested? A training course for new volunteers is starting on 2nd October and we are looking for people living or working in Southwark. Those with language skills are especially welcome. Tel. 071 701 2677 for information.

SOUTH WEST SURREY - local volunteers wanted for HELP-LINE being launched for carers of people with mental health problems. Volunteers work from home, must have a phone and preferably experience of caring. Contact Margaret, Guildford (0483) 578269 for further details. The number given on 10th August was incorrect, sorry. Helpline, not yet fully operational, is (0483) 38936.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears four times a week on Thames Televison at 5.55 approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week on THAMES HELP we are looking at the issue of children in care.

Monday 24th September – Mandy's Story - 1

Many is 17 and has been in care for the past 3 years due to the breakdown of her relationship with her mother. Mandy talks about her feelings regarding being in care and her regrets about the past.

Tuesday 25th September – Mandy's Story - 2

We meet Mandy again, firstly at her supported lodgings that she shares with Sally Anne and her 2 children, then at the local sports centre where Mandy is working as a Community Service Volunteer.

For further information contact Community Service Volunteers (CSV), 237 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NJ. Tel: (071) 278-6601.

Wednesday 26th September – Who Cares?

Who Cares? magazine has been going for 3 years and is the only publication in the world written by and for young people in care. We visit one of their regular editorial meetings and talk to it's founder, Tory Laughland, about the future.

Ring 071-388 8282 after the programme for a free copy of Who Cares? or write to the National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE. Tel: 071-278 9441.

Thursday 27th September – Children Act

Carol has not seen her 2 grandchildren for over 2 years ever since they went into care. This is one circumstance that should not recur once the Children Act comes into force this time next year.

Ring 071-388 8282 after the programme for a copy of the Children Legal Centre's Briefing Document on the Act, or contact the Family Rights Group, 18 Ashwin Street, London, E8 3DL. Tel: 071-923 2628.

The regular Monday lunchtime edition of THAMES HELP not only previews the week's programmes but also has regular features of its own including a COMMUNITY ACTION SLOT and a VOLUNTEER NOTICEBOARD, compiled in conjunction with this page.

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

THE SURVIVORS' NETWORK (Brighton) provides a telephone helpline and group meetings for women who have been sexually abused in childhood. We would welcome more trained counsellors (women) for the helpline and to offer individual or group sessions regularly. For details call Carole 0273 550534 or write to Survivors' Network, Box 188 Brighton BN1 7JW.

LOCAL TO WANDSWORTH? Interested in one-to-one work with a teenager who's been 'cautioned' by police? Aims: to keep teenagers out of court, offer non-authority support etc. Training, supervision, basic expenses for vols. Approx. 1 eve/afternoon p/w. Wandsworth Befrienders Scheme, 177 Blackshaw Road, Tooting, London SW17. Tel: 081 672 3021.

LONDON HOSPITAL Bereavement Service seeks Co-ordinator. Good admin./organisational and typing work under own initiative. Some work from home necessary. You will be a member of the LHBS voluntary team and good support is available. 20 hours per week. Phone 071 247 1209 for application form.

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE in Southwark is looking for volunteers to work with people with a learning difficulty, to enable them to enjoy their recreation time. Training & support given. Call Geoff Jones 071 703 0261.

ADFAM National Helpline for the families and friends of drug users needs volunteers to provide information & support to callers. Full training given. Expenses provided. Helpline is open 10 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday - close to South Kensington tube. Please call Anne on 071 823 9313 for further details.

BONDWAY NIGHTSHELTER, an emergency provision for homeless men, requires volunteers (aged 18-30) to work for approximately six months. An allowance and accommodation provided. We recruit throughout the year, so welcome applications from those wishing to be considered at a later stage. For further details contact please contact: Volunteer Coordinator, PO Box 374, London, SW8 1SJ and enclose S.A.E.

THE PARKINSON'S DISEASE Society, through its local branches seeks to help sufferers with the problems arising from the affliction and to provide funding for medical research to find a cure for the disease. Our branches need volunteers to help in this vital work. Contact Rodney Wolfe Coe 081-852 4337

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU in Lancashire seeks volunteer advice workers. All training is provided. Time commitment of 6 hours per week. We are handling a growing debt and social security appeal caseload, and are keen to develop outreach services in the community. Expenses paid. If you are interested in challenging and varied work for further information contact Derek King on 0254 385043. Hyndburn Area C.A.B., 20-22, Whalley Road, Accrington BB5 1AA.

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New Statesman & Society,
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ
Telephone: 071-739-1645
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Telex 28449

Appointments

THE NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S BUREAU

Committed to becoming an equal opportunities employer

Research Officer

Under Fives Initiative

Salary £14,559-£18,522

We are seeking to appoint an experienced, full-time social researcher to work on this important three-year study, which will monitor and evaluate the Department of Health's new Under Fives Initiative. The Initiative has provided funding for some 25 projects throughout England, which cater for families with children in the pre-school age range. There are four main categories of projects including those for lone parents, homeless families, home-based carers and those promoting partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors. Our task is to monitor and evaluate their progress and some knowledge of these specific areas is desirable but not essential.

Applicants should have an academic qualification, or equivalent knowledge in one of the social sciences. Experience of data collection, analysis and report writing is also necessary. A commitment and sensitivity to equal opportunities and anti-racist policy and practice is also essential.

Closing date: 8 October 1990

Interview date: 30 October 1990

Further details from: Personnel Department, National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE. Tel: 071-278 9441.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

REFUGEE WORK CO-ORDINATOR and POLICY ADVISOR

An experienced person to promote liaison, and consultation between Catholic groups and agencies working for refugees in England and Wales, and in the European Community, in the lead up to 1993: also liaison with other refugee agencies, voluntary bodies and national and Community institutions.

Also to provide information and background on refugee problems to assist the Bishops in formulating their response to refugee issues.

You will be familiar with the procedures and organisation of the Catholic Church, able to work with Committees and diverse groups, and capable of assessing complex situations and writing clear briefs.

The post will be on a 2 year fixed contract, renewable for a 3rd year. Based in London, Victoria. Salary not less than £15,000 (review pending) and according to experience.

Closing date for applications 15 October.
Interviews 30 October.

For job description and details write with s.a.e. to:
The Administrator, Bishops' Conference Secretariat, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1PD.

Working with Young Offenders in southern Africa

Probation Officer

The Swaziland Association for Crime Prevention and the Rehabilitation of Offenders (SACRO) has requested a Probation Officer with CSO experience to continue the implemention of a programme similar to the U.K. Community Service Order involving an Extramural Penal Employment Programme and an Aftercare Programme.

Applicants should have CQSW and at least 5 years' experience of probation work, with at least 2 years involvement with Community Service Orders, preferably at policy and planning level.

SKILLSHARE AFRICA provides a 2 year contract, modest salary, return flights, free housing, NI contributions, medical cover, language training where necessary and a locally-based Skillshare Africa staff for support.

For applications contact: **Recruitment/Selection Unit**
Skillshare Africa, 3 Belvoir St. LEICESTER LE1 6SL
Tel: (0533) 541862 Telex: 9312131159 (CG G) Fax No. (0533) 542614.

Skillshare AFRICA

Closing Date for applications: 8 Oct 90 **Please quote ref: NSS/9/90**

CABLELINE YOUTH PROJECT
requires a

SENIOR YOUTH WORKER

Salary Scale: JNC (2)c

Are you interested in Youth Drugs Education and Prevention work? Can you demonstrate an ability to organise a Youth Work Programme in a multi-cultural Inner City area? Do you want to make a contribution to this complex and developing field? Then we want to hear from you. We can offer an exciting and rewarding opportunity to be part of a new and innovative project.

For job description and application form contact: John Kilfeather at Cableline Youth Project, 66 Johnson Street, London E1 0AQ. Tel: 071-265 9084.

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HEALTH CENTRE CO-ORDINATOR

The FACTS Health Co-ordination Centre has been established in North London by the charity FACTS, The Foundation for AIDS Counselling Treatment & Support, to promote and develop primary health care for those affected by HIV. Toward this objective, the Centre will offer facilities to various affiliated groups and strive to create a safe, unoppressive and supportive environment for the non-residential treatment and care of people with AIDS and HIV-related conditions.

We are seeking a highly motivated and caring individual to act as Co-ordinator for this Centre. The ideal candidate will possess strong inter-personal skills and be able to communicate effectively and diplomatically at all levels. Strengths in the areas of organisation, supervision and project co-ordination will be of paramount importance to you in this capacity. Your background should exhibit these characteristics and numeracy and might also include charity-related experience.

The post involves co-ordinating the activities of voluntary organisations having facilities in our Crouch End premises. It will also develop links with other organisations working in the field of HIV, liaison with statutory authorities and fund raising for The FACTS Centre.

FACTS AIDS

As one of the key people involved in developing this high profile Centre, your potential for growth and responsibility will be limited only by your talent and dedication. Remuneration in excess of £20,000 can be expected. Applications should be received at FACTS by 5th October.

If you are looking for a challenging position where the benefits are personally rewarding, please contact Lynn Durand at:

The FACTS Health Co-ordination Centre
Weston Park (between 23 & 25), Crouch End, London N8 9SY
Phone: 081-348 9195. Fax: 081-340 5864

FACTS is an equal opportunities employer.

MACINTYRE

Developing Purposeful Lives for People with a Mental Disability

OUR CLIENTS NEED ART THERAPY

ART THERAPIST

Senior II Whitley £10,970 to £13,130

MacIntyre Tall Trees provides a home and work setting for 9 people with complex disabilities. Therapy is viewed as an integral part of the total care of the residents and the Art Therapist will be expected to work alongside the Music Therapists and Social Workers. Art Therapy has been well established over the past four years and through changes in one Music Therapist's role there is need for increased therapy input.

We are looking for someone who believes in the role of therapy in the total life of an individual, and can apply their specialised knowledge in terms which are accessible to the rest of the staff team, Therapists are regarded as senior team members and take up additional responsibilities for counselling of parents, supervision of staff, responsibility for certain aspects of the team's work, and supporting the work of the team leader in the general decision making process. Experience as a therapist is important for this post.

MacIntyre are committed to the professional training of all its staff, and have an expanding staff development department. There is also a Company pension scheme.

Terms and conditions of employment are in line with local authorities, the vacancy is immediate.

Interviews will be on Friday, 12th October 1990.

For further details please write to or ring Clare Campling at MacIntyre Tall Trees, Shipton-under-Wychwood, Oxford OX7 6DB, Telephone: 0993 830341.

MENCAP

Royal Society for Mentally Handicapped Children and Adults

MENCAP

MENCAP IN WALES
A PARTNERSHIP WITH SOUTH GLAMORGAN PARENTS FEDERATION

FIELD OFFICER

£10,776 to £13,386

A new post created to enable the Federation to enhance parental involvement in the All Wales Strategy for people with a mental handicap.

The person will be employed by and based with Mencap. An ability to effectively gather and communicate information in issues relevant to parents and assist them represent their views, is essential. The skills to work with the Federation to develop participation in the planning of services, are also required.

Ideally applicants should have experience of working within group and/or community work settings related to services for people with a disability.

Application details from:
Mencap in Wales
169 City Road, Cardiff CF2 3JB
Tel: 0222 494933
Closing date: October 8, 1990.

Humanist Society requires secretary 3 days per week to arrange lecture programme, keep accounts, and take minutes. £6,000 p.a. approx.

Apply Hon Rep. South Place Ethical Society, Conway Hall, 25 Red Lion Square, Holborn WC1R 4RL.

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Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

POLITICAL CAMPAIGNER

DEFEND THE GAINS OF THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION

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Salary : c.£11,300 + annual increment.

For job details and application form write to :
Personnel, NSC, 23, Bevenden Street
London, N1 6BH, or phone 071-253 2464
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Meetings

CRISIS IN THE GULF

PUBLIC MEETING

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 25TH
7 PM – 9.30 PM
FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD, LONDON NW1
(OPPOSITE EUSTON STATION)

- **Bruce Kent** *Chair of CND*
- **Tony Benn** *Labour MP*
- **Dafydd Elis Thomas** *Plaid Cymru MP*
- **Sara Parkin** *Green Party*
- **Jonathan Fryer** *Liberal Democrat & broadcaster*
- **Marion Farouk Sluglett** *Writer on Iraqi politics*
- **George Joffe** *Commentator on the Middle East*
- **Donald Fathers** *Father of detainee in Iraq*
- **Malcolm Harper** *Director, United Nations Association*
- **Andrew Clark** *General Secretary Quaker Peace & Service*

ORGANISED BY CND, 162 HOLLOWAY ROAD, LONDON N7 8DQ. TEL. 071-700 2393

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Courses

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Applications are invited for a 1-year full-time post-graduate course starting in January 1991. This M.A. would appeal to those involved in the arts, art education, psychotherapy, psychology and psychiatry, as well as practising art therapists.

Details and application form (on receipt of A4/A5 sized s.a.e.) from the Centre at: Department of Psychiatry, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield, S10 2JF.

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Further details and application forms: Faculty Office, Faculty of Business, Management and Social Studies, PCL, 32-38 Wells Street, London W1P 3FG. Tel: 071-911 5000.

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Agenda
Fri 28th Sept

SHAW SOCIETY
Fri. 28th Sept
Shaw in Russia
A dramatisation by
Donald Sutherland and friends
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holburn. Coffee 6.30 pm meeting 7.00 pm.

Miscellaneous

WOMEN AND AIDS educational programme for World Aids Day seeking HIV positive women willing to appear. Anonymity guaranteed. Payment. Direct line 081 991 8012.

Accommodation Wanted

MALE ACADEMIC, Indian birth requires 2/3 bedroom cottage/bungalow for long let beginning Jan 1991. Remote countryside in or near village: England, Scotland, Wales. Up to £75.00 a week. Ring 071 485 3959.

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ASIAN MARRIAGE & FRIENDSHIP Bureau International welcomes non-Asians. All areas/ages. DNSS, 181 Melton Road, Leicester. Tel/Fax 0533-610266.

"OLD FRIENDS", five years of civilised introduction for the over 40s: A countrywide service with a personal touch. Details from Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, London N5 2DB. Tel 071-226 5432.

FOR FRIENDS INTERESTED IN GREEN ISSUES, alternative therapies, human rights, and stress-free lifestyles contact NATURAL FRIENDS (NS), 15, Benyon Gardens, Culford, Suffolk, IP28 6EA (stamp appreciated). 028484-315.

Heartsearch

ATTRACTIVE ANGLO-ITALIAN MALE, 30, into politics, theatre, film, sport, travel and consumerism seeks lively female for caring, sharing love and laughter. London. Photo, telephone appreciated. Write Box (33) 415.

ASIAN INDIAN GIRL; 29 years; practising Jehovahs Witness; working in London. Wishes to contact sincere Jehovahs Witness with view to marriage. Please write to Box (32) 410.

WELL-EDUCATED, ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 41, lively, musical, wishes to be tempted by a sensitive, imaginative and cultured man into new adventures. Please write to Box (32) 409.

SOULMATE SOUGHT, lively-minded, interesting man with joie-de-vivre, keen on books, music, walking, travel for similar woman, early fifties. Home Counties west. Box (34) 428.

EDUCATED MALE, YOUNG 60, urgently needs male/female companion; voluble, interested applied arts, any age/colour, to live with. Good personality/sense of humour. Box (36) 453.

ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, FEMALE, 28, graduate. Many interests, inexpensive tastes. Loves countryside, music, film. Lovely son, 3. Seeks kind, good humoured male friend. Southwest/anywhere. Please reply Box (36) 454.

FEMALE WOULD LIKE masculine company on her weekly hikes/theatre trips etc. Warm, feminist, atheist (are you?). West Yorks. 35 - 45. Please write to Box (36) 455.

BRIGHT, ATTRACTIVE SUPERMINI – sensitive; healthy runner (non-smoker). 34, own garage, divorced, now studying car maintenance. I would like to meet masculine, executive model - reliable, catalytic converter, other car-friendly, 28 to 45, to share open road, drive-ins, theme parks. Sheffield/S. Yorks. Box (36) 456.

ENTERPRISING WIDOW, 60+, sexually active seeks like minded gentleman for occassional meetings London, Wiltshire - other interests, the Arts, theatre, travel, wining & dining. Please reply to Box (36) 457.

ELIGIBLE BACHELOR, 35, 6ft., professional, affluent, homes in London and Wiltshire, awaits entrapment by attractive younger lady. Photo/phone please. Box (36) 458.

FEMALE ARTIST of International standing, slim, attractive, seeks sophisticated, refined, educated, fun-loving, romantic, successful, quality man in his mid/late fifties with a zest for life, intellectual growth and the desire to share it permanently with a quality woman. I have everything in my life except the right man. Central London. Write to Box (36) 459.

UNDEMANDING INDEPENDENT LADY, forties, kind but reticent nature, reasonable looks, Jewish background, would like to establish companionable relationship with pleasant, cultured, unattached gentleman in London sharing interests in the performing arts, books and travel. Please write to Box (36) 460.

INTELLIGENT, PROFESSIONAL WOMAN with alcoholic son needs help, support and love for herself. Write to Box (36) 461.

VEGETARIAN MAN, 46 divorced yet stable lifestyle seeks lady in similar circumstances in the hope of creating a new beginning. Please call 081-291 3270 evenings/weekends.

WALKING COMPANION WANTED for enthusiastic energetic traveller ((F49). Holiday October Southern Europe and/or weekends or more. Please write to Box (36) 462.

ATTRACTIVE MERCURIAL WOMAN, water colour artist, young 56, seeks interesting caring relationship with educated male 56+. Please reply to Box (36) 463.

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Your advertisement appears in *New Statesman & Society* with your own personalised telephone number. Readers leave recorded messages for you on this number and by using your own personalised security code only you have access to these messages.

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Tel: 0839 81 2000 Teledating index and information line
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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3143 (previously misnumbered) Set by Ms de Meaner and Dot Matrix
Newspaper editorials of extreme pomposity and banality, starting with the sentence (from a *Guardian* leader): "Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this?"

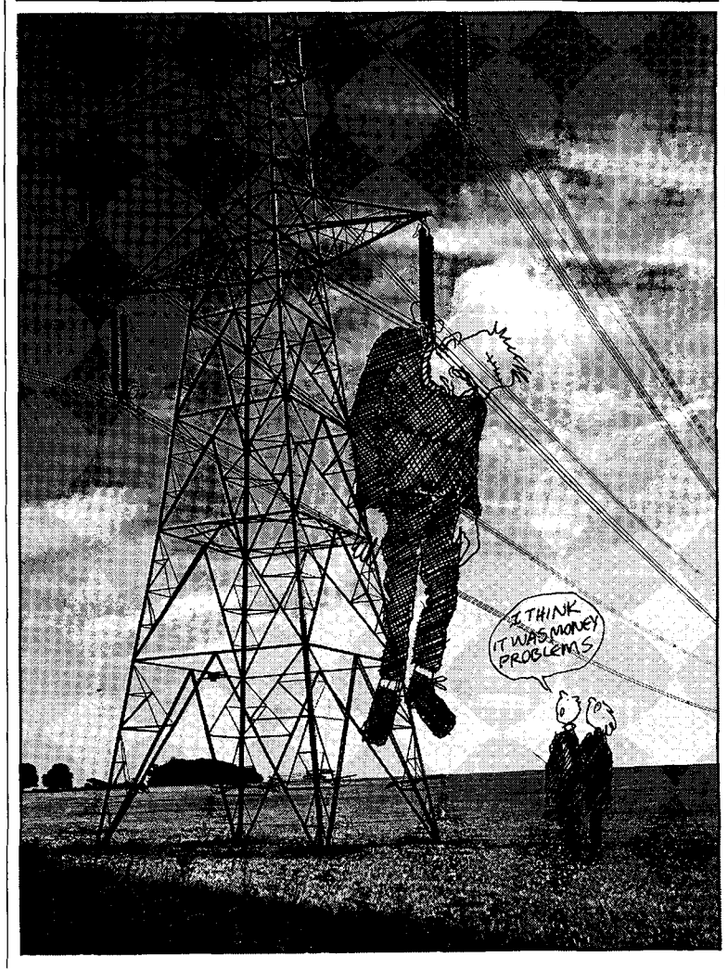
Report by Dot Matrix
As no mean *feuilletonist* myself, your entries chilled me to the marrow. Is the style really that transparent? Among phrases to savour (but not enough to give a prize to) were "The United States is a large country with a huge population..." (D A Prince), "Today a scimitar hangs over the Arabian peninsular suspended by a silken thread of hemp..." (Andrew Bennett) and "Caught between the Scylla of intervention and the Charybdis of inaction..." (Adrian Vale). £15 per winner. Remind me to set this comp again some time.

On another note, Mrs Kenneth Macintyre has written to complain that Giles Swayne's winning entry last week broke the rules, by virtue of two consecutive four-syllable words. Well spotted, Mrs Macintyre. If Mr Swayne wins again, we shall dock £5 from his prize and send it to you. But the contingency is remote.

Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this? Or indeed President of the Soviet Union? Was there ever a time when leadership itself—no matter who the led or what the direction—was of such fundamental importance to the world? The central principle of democratic leadership, one might say, is at this moment on trial. By a strange irony, the leaders of the two most powerful nations upon earth are both beset and hedged about by powerful constraints: the one by convulsions that challenge the very future of the Union; the other by checks and balances devised by the Founding Fathers two hundred years ago; and both by the self-important busybodies of the United Nations. At a time of unprecedented crisis, the leaders of these two great powers are obliged to negate their function of leading, and to take refuge in mealy-mouthed platitudes. The upsurge of popular will, reflected by the media, obliges them to stop leading from the front and instead to gesture vainly on the sidelines. They are, in a very real sense, emasculated and impotent. Indeed, even the leaders of this journal are read and heeded by fewer people than before. Small wonder, then, that the 40th President of the United States is not always taken at his face-value.

David Heaton

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE



Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this? The incumbent of this office, clearly the most prestigious yet demanding in the western world, even in times of peace and tranquillity, needs the intellect of Socrates, the wisdom of Solomon, the patience of Job, the tenacity of Churchill, the leadership of Hitler and the charisma of Gandhi. Additionally, in these dark days of turmoil and uncertainty, the President has to display the skills of the tightrope walker, the agility of the acrobat, the dexterity of the plate-spinner and the illusive ability of the magician. He has to walk on egg-shells without breaking a single one, yet be able to make an omelette fit for a king. He/she must have regard to equal opportunities, ethnic diversity and racial pluralism. Sensitivity is needed to reconcile the needs of the individual, the many varied and various groups in the community and the nation as a whole, both at home and abroad. Notwithstanding the rigours of office, there are benefits; status, immediate gratification, and a place in the Nation's hall of fame. Who could ask for more?

Bernard Doswell

Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this? It is not only nations that are happy when they have no history. Now that the beginning of what is generally agreed to be a difficult situation is drawing to a close the burning question must be, is this the occasion to take time by the forelock, or to wait upon the event? Is it the time to take

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one's courage in both hands or decide that discretion is the better part of valour? The immediate steps have been taken: the world has provisionally heaved a sigh of relief. But what now? The President has a heavy responsibility, but it must be remembered that hell is paved with good intentions, and war is a Rubicon that should not be crossed lightly. When the dogs of war are loosed, no one can tell what the end will be. However, the west can be of good cheer, for it is clear that it has a leader at the helm who can balance decisiveness with prudence. Who indeed would shoulder lightly the burden which the President of the United States faces today?

T Griffiths

Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this? Just as the cold war was beginning to defrost, and the President could hope to reflect on the end of history in the gentle warmth of a Maine evening, so events in the Middle East have cast a longer shadow than any tree on the eastern seaboard. The problem of how to respond to this unexpected cataclysm poses some difficult choices. Each potential course of action has attached to it its own set of risks. Yet to do nothing, although often the statesmanlike if unpopular course, is also fraught with dangers. In reaching a decision, the President must balance a wide range of considerations, not all of which are evident at first glance, but equally do not necessarily reveal themselves after due consideration. Small wonder then, that the President has found it necessary to consult with his advisers, as well as with other western leaders. What their advice has been, or should be, is not a matter for us to dwell on at this time. Suffice it to say, although the President will consider it in the round, arriving at a decision that shows the requisite qualities of foresight and strategic vision will not be easy in this hour of crisis.

Wyn Grant

Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this? Indeed who would like to be in the shoes of Margaret Thatcher in this Middle East crisis? For that matter, who would want to be in the sandals of King Hussein of Jordan, or even in the sand-bloomed footwear of Saddam Hussein himself?

The privileges of power may be many, but its responsibilities are even more, a burden to be borne with fortitude and faith as one's followers look to one for leadership at all times.

Some are born to greatness, others have it thrust upon them, and so it is with power. Although standing for office may be seen as an invitation to shoulder the problems of the nation, every president, every prime minister, every monarch and even every Middle Eastern despot is human, and as such, suffers the doubts and weaknesses peculiar to that race or breed.

No one knows the secret grief of a world leader, nor can the depths of his inner thoughts be plumbed, especially by the lay person, though even close friends and acquaintances may equally be blissfully unaware of the trauma of standing at the helm as the clouds build on the international horizon, threatening to swamp the Captain in the impending storm.

Katie Mallett

Who would wish to be President of the United States at a time like this? It can be said without controversy, of course, that there have been crises before—and formidable crises, at that. It can be predicted without difficulty that there will again be crises: for America herself and for the rest of a globe which shrinks almost daily, as rapid modes of communication develop. However, between one crisis and another there can be differences, some small, some great, which render comparisons not only (in the words of the adage) odious, but also, in a world where past experience is of diminishing relevance, owing to the exponential technological developments of recent decades, almost meaningless. It should not be forgotten that the United States of America are unique among modern nations. They combine in an entirely individual manner, capitalism and democracy; they have a wide and volatile ethnic amalgam; above all, perhaps unlike any other major power of world structure, they have not, excepting only the Japanese sortie against Pearl Harbor, been obliged to absorb direct aggression on their own home territory. All these and various other factors (one might mention in this respect weapon diversity, troop mobility and hostage vulnerability) render the position of Head of State a peculiarly problematical one for a single human being to sustain.

Gerard Benson

No 3146 Set by E O Parrott

The party falls silent, and there floats on the air the remark that puts a complete damper on the occasion. Can we have examples please? By 4 October.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

Crossword 1635

Prizes: £5 book tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1635, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by Monday 1 Oct

ACROSS

1. Insolence at greeting will keep the chaps away (8)
5. Made a cut and got some runs (6)
9. Direction indicator which gives one a blow after one's turn (8)
10. Miss going right into a tree (6)
11. For ever sailors are kept in by oriental bird (7)
12. Looks for a weapon in school (7)
13. Kind of correspondence which sets something binding before landlord (11)
16. A man trained badly for the civil service (11)
21. To go in right soon is capital (7)
22. Henry goes to war and becomes an officer (7)
23. Bird in play about state (6)
24. Bored, but well? (8)
25. Supporters from south in Arab country (6)
26. It is fine weather so race to the water (4,4)

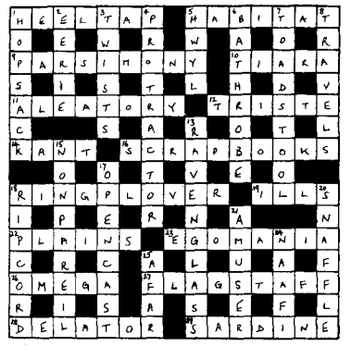
DOWN

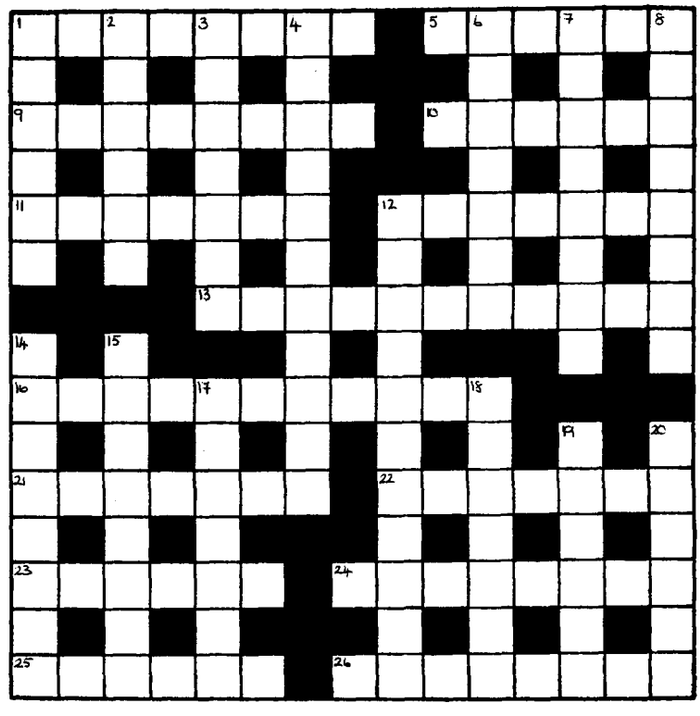
1. Professional man who holds a course about the West (6)
2. One who produces books without right as a playwright (6)
3. Poison which is nicer as concocted (7)
4. Swaying movement which makes one sick during a holiday (11)
6. Tough about an article appearing in this French game (7)
7. To strike over a place to live is sheer greed (8)
8. Furniture for theatre people (8)
12. Police discover one in lake after dispersing danger (11)
14. An assembly of doctors in a manner unconcerned with ethics (8)
15. Entraps as a result of unusual nearness (8)
17. It makes an officer manage although it means being cut off (7)
18. Serious composer found among the established (7)
19. Girl who brews his ale (6)
20. Go into the water with a breather in the middle (6)

Prizewinners for 1633

Kenneth Edinborough, Colchester
S Foot, Exeter
J C Mace, Weston-Super-Mare

Solution to 1633





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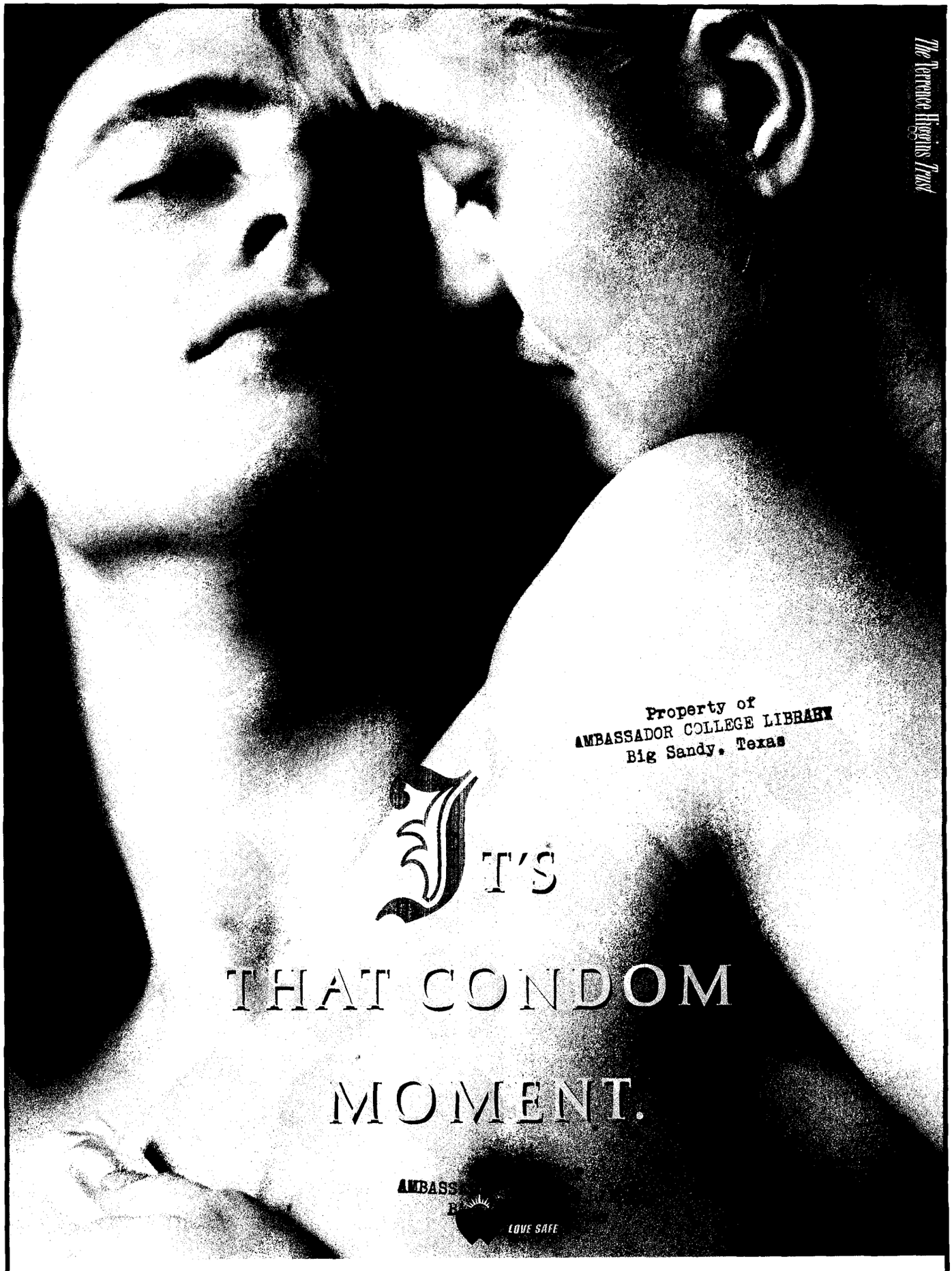

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